

THE DISCIPLE'S COMMENTARY
ON THE GOSPELS

THE DISCIPLE'S COMMENTARY
ON THE GOSPELS : : : *By*
DAVID SMITH, D.D. : : IN THREE
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GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
ST. JOHN

*I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne,
high and lifted up, and His train filled
the Temple.*

THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

SUMMARY

THE PROLOGUE (i. 1-18):

	PASSAGE	PAGE
1. THE ETERNAL WORD	i. 1-5	10
2. HIS MANIFESTATION	i. 6-13	13
3. HIS REVELATION OF THE UNSEEN FATHER .	i. 14-18	16

HIS MANIFESTATION TO ISRAEL

(i. 19-ii. 11)

THE BAPTIST'S TESTIMONY (i. 19-34):

1. TO THE RULERS	i. 19-28	21
2. TO THE MULTITUDE	i. 29-34	25

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF OUR LORD (i. 35-51):

1. BY ANDREW AND JOHN	i. 35-39	27
2. BY SIMON PETER	i. 40-42	31
3. BY PHILIP AND NATHANAEL	i. 43-51	34
HIS FIRST MIRACLE	ii. 1-11	39

PERIOD OF INITIAL SUCCESS

(ii. 12-iv)

AT THE PASSOVER (ii. 12-iii. 21):

1. CLEARING THE TEMPLE-COURT	ii. 12-17	49
2. CHALLENGE OF THE RULERS	ii. 18-22	52
3. INTERVIEW WITH NICODEMUS	ii. 23-iii. 21	54

THE BAPTIST'S LATEST TESTIMONY	iii. 22-36	61
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ON THE WAY TO CAPERNAUM (iv):

1. AT JACOB'S WELL	iv. 1-26	66
2. A LESSON FOR THE DISCIPLES	iv. 27-38	74
3. MINISTRY AT SYCHAR	iv. 39-42	77
4. HEALING OF A NOBLEMAN'S CHILD AT CANA	iv. 43-54	78

SUMMARY

PERIOD OF CONTROVERSY

(v, vi)

	PASSAGE	PAGE
AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA	v. 1-15	85
DISPUTATION WITH THE RULERS	v. 16-47	91
THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND	vi. 1-14	97
WALKING ON THE WATER	vi. 15-21	103
DISCOURSE ON THE BREAD OF LIFE	vi. 22-40	105
ENCOUNTER WITH THE RULERS	vi. 41-59	109
WIDESPREAD DISAFFECTION	vi. 60-71	112

PERIOD OF REJECTION

vii-xi. 54

GOING UP TO THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES	vii. 1-13	119
HIS APPEARANCE AT THE FEAST	vii. 14-36	123
THE LAST DAY OF THE FEAST	vii. 37-52	129
THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY	vii. 53-viii. 11	133
AN ENCOUNTER AT THE TREASURY	viii. 12-20	137
A COARSE SCOFF	viii. 21-30	139
CONFERENCE WITH UNDECIDED PHARISEES	viii. 31-59	141
HEALING OF A MAN BORN BLIND	ix. 1-12	149
HIS EXAMINATION AND EXCOMMUNICATION	ix. 13-34	154
THE TRUE SHEPHERD	ix. 35-x. 18	158
DEPARTURE FROM JERUSALEM	x. 19-42	166
THE DEATH OF LAZARUS	xi. 1-16	172
HIS RESURRECTION	xi. 17-44	177
OUR LORD'S RETREAT TO EPHRAIM	xi. 45-54	185

THE PASSION-WEEK

(xi. 55-xix)

BANQUET AT BETHANY	xi. 55-xii. 11	191
HIS ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM	xii. 12-19	196
LAST SCENE OF HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY	xii. 20-50	198

SUMMARY

5

THE UPPER ROOM (xiii, xiv) :

	PASSAGE	PAGE
1. A LESSON IN HUMILITY	xiii. 1-17	207
2. THE TRAITOR'S EXPULSION	xiii. 18-30	212
3. FOREWARNING OF PETER'S DENIAL	xiii. 31-38	218
4. WORDS OF CHEER (xiv) :		
(1) THE WELCOME HOME	xiv. 1-14	222
(2) THE PROMISE OF THE ADVOCATE	xiv. 15-24	230
(3) OUR LORD'S LEGACY OF PEACE	xiv. 25-31	237

ADJOURNED DISCOURSE (xv, xvi) :

1. THE PARABLE OF THE TRUE VINE	xv. 1-10	243
2. THE FULFILMENT OF THE DISCIPLES' JOY	xv. 11-17	247
3. THEIR INSPIRATION IN PERSECUTION	xv. 18-27	250
4. THE EXPEDIENCY OF OUR LORD'S DEPARTURE	xvi. 1-15	254
5. BRIEF SORROW, LASTING JOY	xvi. 16-24	260
6. CONCLUSION OF THE DISCOURSE	xvi. 25-33	265

OUR LORD'S PRIESTLY PRAYER (xvii) :

1. FOR HIMSELF	xvii. 1-5	268
2. FOR THE ELEVEN	xvii. 6-19	274
3. FOR HIS DISCIPLES IN ALL AGES	xvii. 20-26	281

ARREST IN THE GARDEN xviii. 1-11 286

HIS TRIAL (xviii. 12-xix. 16) :

1. BY THE JEWISH RULERS	xviii. 12-27	291
2. BY THE ROMAN GOVERNOR (xviii. 28-xix. 15) :		
(1) PRESENTATION OF THE CASE	xviii. 28-32	298
(2) EXAMINATION BY PILATE	xviii. 33-38a	302
(3) CHRIST OR BARABBAS?	xviii. 38b-40	304
(4) AN APPEAL TO PITY	xix. 1-11	305
(5) AN APPEAL TO PATRIOTISM	xix. 12-15	308

THE CRUCIFIXION xix. 16-30 311

A BROKEN HEART xix. 31-37 318

HIS BURIAL xix. 38-42 322

SUMMARY

THE RESURRECTION

(xx, xxi)

	PASSAGE	PAGE
"THE BODY OF HIS GLORY"		327
MANIFESTATIONS OF THE RISEN LORD :		
1. TO MARY AT THE SEPULCHRE	xx. 1-18	331
2. TO THE DISCIPLES THE SAME EVENING	xx. 19-23	337
3. TO THE DISCIPLES A WEEK LATER	xx. 24-31	342
4. TO SEVEN AT THE LAKE OF GALILEE (xxi. 1-23) :		
(1) THE GREAT TAKE OF FISH	xxi. 1-14	346
(2) COLLOQUY WITH PETER	xxi. 15-19a	351
(3) THE DISCIPLE WHO SHOULD NEVER DIE	xxi. 19b-23	355

CONCLUSION OF THE GOSPEL

(xxi. 24, 25)

THE PROLOGUE (i. 1-18)

WHEN St. John wrote his matchless Gospel at Ephesus toward the close of his long ministry in the Province of Asia, the thoughts of men, Jews and Pagans alike, had fixed a wide gulf between the world and God. Hebrew monotheism had viewed God as "the Most High," "the high and lofty One inhabiting Eternity," "high above all nations, and His glory above the heavens"; and the question with Jewish theologians in later days was how He could so abase Himself as to have dealings with the world and its inhabitants. For the pagan mind, on the other hand, the difficulty lay in its conception of matter. It was a postulate of ancient philosophy that matter is inherently and essentially evil; and how then could a pure Spirit have contact with a material world?

Hence the problem was how the gulf between God and the world might be bridged; and the Rabbinical theologians had found a way. Their Scriptures were wont to personalise "the Word of God." Thus when a prophet proclaimed his message, his accustomed preface was "The Word of the Lord came unto me, saying." And what says the Psalmist? "He sendeth His word, and healeth them, and delivereth them from their destructions"; "He sendeth forth His commandment upon earth: His word runneth very swiftly"; "He casteth forth His ice like morsels: who can stand before His cold? He sendeth out His word, and melteth them." Here the Rabbis recognised a mighty and beneficent mediator bridging the gulf between God and the world, His agent in creation and providence. And the idea was largely developed in the Targum, the Aramaic paraphrase of the Old Testament Scriptures. Thus, where it is written (Gen. vii. 16) that "the Lord shut him in," the Paraphrase has: "the Lord protected Noah by His Word, when he entered into the ark"; where it is written (xvii. 2): "I will make My covenant between Me and thee," the Paraphrase

has : " He made a covenant between Abraham and His Word " ; where it is written of Ishmael (xxi. 20) that " God was with the lad," the Paraphrase has it that " the Word of the Lord " was with him ; where it is written (xxviii. 21) : " then shall the Lord be my God," according to the Paraphrase Jacob's vow was that " the Word of the Lord should be his God " ; and again, where it is written (Ex. xix. 17) that " Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God," the Paraphrase has : " he brought them forth to meet the Word of God."

Then Philo appeared—that large-hearted, broad-minded Alexandrian Jew who sought to interpret Jewish theology in terms of Greek philosophy and thus imbue the Jews with Greek wisdom and the Greeks with Jewish religion. He elaborated the Rabbinical idea of " the Word of the Lord." How truly personal in his thought was " the Divine *Logos*," i.e., " Word " or " Reason," as he phrases it in Greek, appears from his designations thereof—" the Firstborn," " the Ambassador," " the Archangel," " the Shadow of God," " the Image of God," His " Instrument " in creation, " the Chief Priest," " the Suppliant," " the Paraclete " or " Advocate," " the Man of God," " the Archetypal Man." " He stands on the border betwixt the Creator and the creature, at once a suppliant of the mortal ever pining for immortality and an ambassador of the Ruler unto the subject, neither unbegotten like God nor begotten like us." " To some the Sacred Word like a king proclaims by commandment what they should do ; to others like a familiar teacher he suggests what is profitable ; to others like a counsellor he presents the best resolutions and greatly profits those who know not of themselves what is expedient ; to others like a friend with sweetly reasonable persuasion he communicates many an unspeakable thing which it is not lawful for one uninitiated to hear."

Such was the master thought of earnest minds in those days ; and fantastic as it may now appear, it expressed a profound and ineradicable instinct of the human soul—its hunger for God and its yearning for His fellowship. And recognising how that instinct finds its satisfaction in the Gospel of the Incarnation, the union of God with humanity through His Eternal Son, " the

Archetypal Man," St. John thus prefaces the story which he is about to unfold: "Here is the satisfaction which you are craving. Your dream has come true beyond your imagination. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and we beheld His glory."

1. THE ETERNAL WORD

i. 1-5

1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

2 *The same was in the beginning with God.*

3 *All things were made by him ; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

4 *In him was life ; and the life was the light of men.*

5 *And the light shineth in darkness ; and the darkness comprehended it not.*

IT was written of old in the story of Creation (Gen. i. 1) " In the beginning God." Ere the world was, ere time and its memorials began, God was. And even so it is written here " In the beginning the Word "—even as God, without beginning, timeless, eternal. He was " with God "—His companion ; and, more than that, He " was God "—no mere angelic mediator. He was with God in the silence of Eternity, and when the silence was broken, He was with God still—His fellow-worker. " All things through Him were made, and apart from Him (cf. xv. 5) was made not even one thing." The thought here is not that the Word was the agent but rather that He was the ideal of creation. He was, in Philo's phrase, " the Archetypal Man," the pattern of humanity, the Divine Image in which man was created (cf. Gen. i. 27 ; Col. iii. 10) ; and since the world was created as an arena for the achievement of humanity's high destiny, it was designed and fashioned for that end : " not even one thing was made apart from Him," without reference to the Divine Ideal.

Observe here an important question of punctuation (vers. 3, 4). According to the ante-Nicene Fathers, the interpreters

of the first three centuries, and, so far as they mark punctuation, the oldest manuscripts, the passage runs: "apart from Him was made not even one thing. What hath been made in Him was life." And here arises a fresh question of punctuation—whether the sentence should be read: "What hath been made in Him, was life" or "What hath been made, in Him was life." The latter seems preferable, inasmuch as in the former case the Evangelist would rather have written, as in the preceding clause, "What hath been made *through* Him." And what is the idea of the sentence thus construed? It marks the successive stages of the creation of the world through the Eternal Word: (1) the creation of formless and barren matter, "the dark abyss" of *chaos*, as the Greeks called it ("all things through Him were made, and apart from Him was made not even one thing"), and (2) its animation and its formation into a *cosmos* or orderly world ("what hath been made was life in Him"). This great idea is obliterated when the passage is punctuated after the later fashion as in our Version; and it is interesting to observe the reason of the change as stated by St. Chrysostom. It was argued by the Semi-Arians that, since it is written that "all things were made through Him, and apart from Him was made not even one thing," the Holy Spirit is hereby included in the category of created beings; and it was to counter this argument that the sentence was construed "apart from Him was made not even one thing which hath been made," limiting the statement to created things and inferentially excluding the Holy Spirit.

Read then: "All things through Him were made, and apart from Him was made not even one thing. What hath been made was life in Him." The appearance of life, however, was not the completion of creation; for as yet it was mere animal life. And even as it was written of old (Gen. ii. 7) that after forming man of the dust of the ground "the Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became" no mere animal but "a living soul," so it is written here that "what hath been made was life in Him, and the life was the light of men." The life which animated all creation was in man the kindly light of reason and the knowledge of God. And though sin did its worst,

that light, once kindled, was never extinguished. "The light showeth in the darkness"—it has always shown and is showing still—"and the darkness" not "comprehended it not" but (as in xii. 35, where the word is rendered "come upon" or "overtake") "did not overcome," "overwhelm," or "quench it."

2. HIS MANIFESTATION

i. 6-13

6 *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.*

7 *The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.*

8 *He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.*

9 *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

10 *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.*

11 *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

12 *But as many as received him, to them gave he *power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name :*

13 *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

THE light was never extinguished, but it was hidden from man's darkened mind ; and here is the starting point of the story which the Evangelist has to unfold. " There arose a man, commissioned from God." Observe the contrast here : " In the beginning *was* the Word " ; John "*arose*"—the word rendered in ver. 3 "*were made,*" "*was made.*" The Word was eternal, and was manifested in time ; John "*was made,*" he arose. And see how precisely his mission is defined. " He came for witnessing " or " testifying." As the Apostles and their successors in all ages were charged to be His " witnesses " after His departure, so John was His " witness " ere His advent. And what was the theme of his testimony ? " That he might bear witness of the Light." And what was its purpose ? " That

* Or, *the right, or, privilege.*

all might believe " either (1) " through him," i.e., might believe in the Light through his testimony, or (2) " through it," i.e., might believe in God through the Light which revealed Him.

What follows may be variously construed. " He "—an emphatic pronoun in the original, " that great man " (cf. Mt. xi. 11)—" was not the Light, but came to bear witness of the Light." But what of ver. 9? It may be thus rendered literally: " He (the Word) was the true " or rather " the real Light which enlighteneth every man coming into the world," i.e., according as the participle is construed with " man " or with " which," either (1) " the real light which enlighteneth every man on his coming into the world," since there is an instinctive knowledge of God, a divine spark, however feeble and dim, in every human soul, or (2) " the real Light which, coming into the world, enlighteneth every man," since it shines on all, even " on the eyes that will not see." It is, however, more accordant with the Greek besides yielding a finer sense to take " the real Light " not as predicate but as subject and to render the passage thus: " That great man was not the Light, but came to bear witness of the Light. The Light, the real Light, which enlighteneth every man, was coming—was on its way—into the world."

The coming of the Light into the world was merely the manifestation of the Eternal Word, ever present though unperceived. " He was in the world, and the world through Him was made (cf. ver. 3), and the world did not recognise Him." Observe what follows. " He came unto " not simply " His own " but " His own domain," i.e., the world which was made through Him (cf. xvi. 32 and xix. 27, where the phrase is rendered " his own home "), " and His own people (cf. xiii. 1 and Ac. iv. 23, where the phrase is rendered " their own company ") did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, He gave them authority to rank as children of God," reinstating them in their forfeited birthright. And the recipients of this high privilege the Evangelist further defines, according to the common text, as " them that believe in His name, who were begotten not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God." Here two difficulties emerge. (1) In the original " blood " is plural; and the question is what " begotten of bloods " may

mean. (2) On the analogy of "man's device" (Ac. xvii. 29), "the heart of man" (1 Cor. ii. 9), and like phrases "the will of man" might signify "human will" were it not that here "man" denotes in the original not merely a human being but a man as distinguished from a woman. And thus the Evangelist's phrase is properly "the will of a husband." What then does the sentence mean? On the evidence of authorities far older than our earliest manuscript, especially St. Justin Martyr, St. Irenæus, Origen, and Tertullian, it originally ran: "them that believe in the name of Him who was begotten not of bloods (the mingled blood of human parents) nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of a husband but of God." And thus it is St. John's testimony, precise and clear, to the miracle of our Lord's birth—"begotten in the Virgin's womb of the Holy Spirit" (cf. Mt. i. 18, 20).

3. HIS REVELATION OF THE UNSEEN FATHER

i. 14-18

14 *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

15 *John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me : for he was before me.*

16 *And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.*

17 *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

18 *No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

HERE in a passage of exquisite beauty the Evangelist shows how the revelation of the Eternal Word Incarnate realised and satisfied the dreams and yearnings of the children of men. Observe that word "dwelt" or, as the Revisers have it in their margin, "tabernacled." Its significance lies in this—that the Greek word for "tabernacle" or "tent" was *skené*, and by reason of the verbal assonance it was employed to represent the Hebrew *shekinah*. And what was the *Shekinah*? It was the Cloud of Glory, the visible token of the Lord's presence in their midst, which guided the Israelites through the wilderness and overshadowed the Mercy-seat. When they reached the Promised Land and the old Tabernacle was replaced by the magnificent Temple of Solomon, the *Shekinah* took its station over the Mercy-seat in the new Sanctuary, proving that the Lord had accepted the House which His people had built to His name. "It came to pass, when the priests were come out of the Holy Place, that the Cloud filled the House of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the Cloud : for the glory of the Lord filled the House of the Lord "

(1 Ki. viii. 10, 11). By and by Jerusalem was laid in ruins by the Assyrians, and when the people returned from their long captivity, they repaired the Temple with their feeble hands and their scanty resources; but the *Shekinah* never reappeared, and their hope thenceforward was that when the Messiah came, He would bring back the vanished glory. And here the Evangelist proclaims the realisation of their dream: "The Word was made flesh, and the *Shekinah* was among us."

It appears from the Egyptian Papyri that, since in the Common Greek of that period "full" was an indeclinable adjective, it is permissible to construe it here not with "the Word" but with "glory"; and so the sentence, disembarrassed of that awkward parenthesis, runs thus: "The Word was made flesh, and the *Shekinah* was among us; and we beheld His glory, such glory as an only son hath from his father, full of grace and truth." And what this signifies the Evangelist proceeds to unfold. It is not the Word Himself that is here in question but His glory; and first the Evangelist justifies his description thereof as "such glory as an only son hath from his father" by quoting the Baptist's testimony: "John beareth witness and crieth (a word expressive of emotional emphasis; cf. vii. 28, 37, xii. 44), saying, This is He of whom I said (or, as some manuscripts have, "he it was that said it"—a parenthetical reaffirmation by the Evangelist that it was not a saying of his own but the Baptist's testimony), 'He that is coming after me hath taken precedence of me, because He was ere I was.' " That is to say, the Word was no mere prophet like the Baptist, nor His glory merely such as a prophet might have revealed. It was the very glory of God dwelling in Him and shining forth from Him—"such glory as an only son hath from his father."

And, adds the Evangelist, John's testimony had been verified by experience. "For," says he (not "And"), "of His fulness we all received, and grace for grace," more precisely "instead of," "in the place of grace." There are evidences in our Gospel of the Evangelist's acquaintance with the thought of Philo, and his language here is aptly illustrated by a striking passage where the great Alexandrian Jew speaks of God's method in the

communication of His revelations : " He always stays the first graces ere the recipients are sated and wax wanton, and in after ministration bestows others in place of those, and third graces in place of the second, and always new graces in place of the older, sometimes different and sometimes again the same." Here is the very thought of the Evangelist. Grace is like a river. The stream flows ever on, yet its water never fails. The water of yesterday is gone, but new water is in its place to-day, and to-day's water will be replaced by the morrow's. And there is enough and to spare for all. " Of His fulness we all received, and grace for grace."

It is a stream of " grace," and not only of grace but of " truth." " We beheld His glory, full of grace and truth." In these two qualities lies the blessed difference between the old order and the new. (1) The old order was full of dread. " Speak thou with us, and we will hear," was the people's entreaty to Moses at Mount Sinai (Ex. xx. 19) : " but let not God speak with us, lest we die." But the glory of the Word made flesh is " full of grace." And (2) it is " full of truth"—reality as against symbol, substance as against shadow (cf. Heb. x. 1 ; Col. ii. 17). " For the Law was given through Moses : the grace and the truth were"—not merely " given " or " transmitted " but—" made through Jesus Christ."

Thus at the close of the high argument the veil is drawn aside and the Word is introduced by name—Jesus, the Messiah, the Promised Redeemer, the Eternal Son of God, the Interpreter of the Unseen Father. " God hath none ever yet seen : an Only Son (cf. ver. 14), Himself God (so runs the original text), who is in the bosom of the Father (cf. Lk. xvi. 23, where see exposition)—He interpreted Him."

HIS MANIFESTATION TO ISRAEL

i. 19-ii. 11

THE BAPTIST'S TESTIMONY (i. 19-34)

I. TO THE RULERS

i. 19-28

19 *And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou ?*

20 *And he confessed, and denied not ; but confessed, I am not the Christ.*

21 *And they asked him, What then ? Art thou Elias ? And he saith, I am not. Art thou *that prophet ? And he answered, No.*

22 *Then said they unto him, Who art thou ? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself ?*

23 *He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.*

24 *And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.*

25 *And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet ?*

26 *John answered them, saying, I baptize with water : but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not ;*

27 *He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.*

28 *These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.*

HERE at the very outset is an exemplification of our Evangelist's procedure. His purpose, as defined by early and indubitable tradition (cf. Introduction, p. xxix) was not to tell the complete story of our Lord's earthly ministry but to supply what was lacking in the narratives of his three predecessors ; and therefore he assumes whatever they have already written. See how abruptly he introduces John. The Synoptists always style him " John the Baptist " in distinction

* Or, a prophet.

from John the son of Zebedee ; but since our Evangelist never mentions the latter, herein betraying his identity (cf. Introduction, p. xxviii), discrimination is unnecessary in his narrative. The order of events is that our Lord had been baptised by John in the Jordan, and had then retired to the wilderness, where He spent forty days in solitary searching of heart and communion with God. And here our Evangelist takes up the story. Observe how the narrative fixes the position of the incident. It happened (1) after the Baptism of our Lord (cf. ver. 32) and (2) on the last day of His retirement in the wilderness (cf. ver. 29).

The scene of the Baptist's ministry was a place on the left bank of the Jordan, indifferently named in our manuscripts (ver. 28) Bethabara, "the House of the Crossing" or "Ford-town," and Bethany (R.V.), "the House of the Boat" or "Ferrytown." According to St. Jerome who, residing in his hermitage at Bethlehem, well knew the locality and its traditions, it was the place where the Israelites under Joshua had crossed over into the Promised Land (cf. exposition of Mt. iii. 9) ; and in our Lord's day it was the southern ford of the Jordan crossed by the numerous travellers between Galilee and Judæa by the eastern route through Peræa. The Baptist's stirring ministry there had naturally engaged the attention of the religious authorities in the capital—"the Jews" as St. John designates them, meaning in his later parlance the representatives of the unbelieving nation which had rejected and crucified its Messiah. They are the same personages whom the earlier Evangelists call "the Sadducees and Pharisees" or "the Chief Priests and Scribes" ; and in either case it is generally the Sanhedrin that is denoted (cf. Mt. ii. 4), the supreme court of seventy-two members representing the two rival parties under the presidency of the acting Chief Priest. Profoundly impressed by what they had heard and what they had themselves witnessed (cf. Mt. iii. 7) of the Baptist's ministry, they were at a loss what to make of it. It was indeed a daring usurpation of their official prerogatives ; yet they hesitated to adopt repressive measures lest they should be guilty of impiety. For who was John ? He was certainly no ordinary personage ; and if he were not, as many were inclined to believe (cf. Lk. iii. 15), actually the Messiah,

might he not be the prophet who should appear on the eve of His advent, whether Elijah according to the expectation of later days (cf. exposition of Mt. iii. 1-12) or some other of the ancient prophets recalled to life (cf. Mt. xvi. 14)?

Recognising these possibilities, they resolved to despatch delegates to Bethabara to interview him and ascertain the truth. The proposal originated naturally with the Pharisees, since as the popular leaders and "the Teachers of Israel" (cf. iii. 10) they were specially concerned with doctrinal innovation (cf. ver. 24, where read: "and they had been commissioned from" or rather "on the motion of the Pharisees"); but with characteristic astuteness they chose as their delegates "Priests and Levites" forasmuch as these would be more acceptable to John as being himself a priest's son.

And what was his "record" or rather "testimony" when the deputies approached him? Observe his answers to their successive questions. To the question whether he were the Messiah he returned an energetic and uncompromising denial. "He confessed and denied not. 'I,' he confessed, 'am not the Christ.'" When they passed to the first alternative "Art thou Elijah?" his negation was hardly less emphatic: "I am not." But when they asked finally "Art thou the (not "that") prophet?" his answer was a simple "No." The point is that he would shatter the notion that he was the Messiah, so subversive as it was of the supreme end of his ministry, nor would he lend himself, as a fanatic might, to the superstitious expectation of a reincarnate Elijah; but it was otherwise with the idea that he was "the prophet." He was not indeed one of the ancient prophets recalled to life, yet he was truly a prophet of the ancient order and his ministry had been foreseen of old. And so much he affirmed when, reassured by his threefold denial, the delegates brusquely demanded "Who art thou? What sayest thou of thyself?" "I am," said he in the language of Scripture (Is. xl. 3), "'the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord.'" He was not the Messiah, but he was the Messiah's herald.

Pursuing their commission they then challenged the legitimacy of his innovations, particularly his practice of the

novel rite of baptism. And here he found an opportunity for restating his mission and his message. His rite of baptism was prophetic. It foreshadowed the ministry of One far greater, who was actually in their midst unrecognised. "In the midst of you," said he according to the true text (vers. 26, 27), "standeth One whom ye know not, 'He who is coming' (a Jewish designation of the Messiah) after me, whose sandal-strap I am not worthy to unloose (cf. Mk. i. 7; Lk. iii. 16)"—a proverb for menial service, since it was a slave's office to take off the sandals of guests on their arrival and wash their dusty feet. An alternative form of the proverb was "to carry one's sandals" (cf. Mt. iii. 11). The maid who performed this office for her mistress was styled contemptuously "a sandal-carrier" (*sandaligerula*).

2. TO THE MULTITUDE

i. 29-34

29 *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which *taketh away the sin of the world.*

30 *This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me : for he was before me.*

31 *And I knew him not : but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.*

32 *And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.*

33 *And I knew him not : but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*

34 *And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.*

IT was on the last day of our Lord's retirement in the wilderness that the Sanhedrin's delegates interviewed the Baptist ; and now " the next day " or rather " on the morrow " He returns thence to Bethabara. The Evangelist after his manner illumines the situation in a brief sentence when he writes " John seeth Jesus coming unto him." For the word in the original here signifies not merely " see " but " look," " gaze "—look intently, heedfully, wonderingly. It is the word which he uses again, for example, of the disciples " looking one on another " in the Upper Room when they heard the announcement of the Betrayal (xiii. 22). So the Baptist " looked at Jesus " when He reappeared. He was engaged in preaching to the eager multitude, and evidently, in view of the approaching Passover, his theme was the Paschal Lamb and the fulfilment of the promise of that ancient offering ; and pausing in his discourse

* Or, beareth.

he pointed to Jesus and cried : " Behold ! the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

And then he recalled the scene which, as the earlier Evangelists have recorded, had been enacted there six weeks ago when the dove had hovered above our Lord as He stood praying on the river-bank (see exposition of Mt. iii. 13-17 ; Mk. i. 9-11 ; Lk. iii. 21, 22). The voice proclaiming Him " the Son of God " had been unheard by the multitude ; but the revelation had reached John's quickened spirit, and he had recognised the holy Stranger and had proclaimed Him the Messiah. And now he reiterates the announcement : " This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a Man who hath taken precedence of me, because He was ere I was." " John testified, saying, I have beheld (the same word here as in ver. 14) the Spirit descending as a dove from heaven, and it abode upon Him. And I have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God—the Messiah."

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF OUR LORD (i. 35-51)

I. BY ANDREW AND JOHN

i. 35-39

35 *Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples ;*
36 *And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the*
Lamb of God !

37 *And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed*
Jesus.

38 *Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto*
them, What seek ye ? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say,
*being interpreted, Master,) where *dwellest thou ?*

39 *He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where*
he dwelt, and abode with him that day : for it was †about the tenth hour.

IT would be evening when the Baptist thus publicly proclaimed our Lord as the Messiah, since he would hardly have been preaching in the heat of the day, and our Lord would spend most of the day in travelling from His retreat in the wilderness to Bethabara. "On the morrow" the prophet was standing in converse with two of his disciples. One of these was Andrew, a Galilean fisherman ; and the other, significantly unnamed, was none other than the Evangelist, John the son of Zebedee, also a Galilean fisherman (cf. Introduction, p. xxviii). As they conversed on the theme of the hour, Jesus appeared "walking," literally "walking about"—pacing to and fro along the river-bank. The Baptist "looked upon Him"—"fixed his earnest gaze upon Him" (the phrase which occurs again in Mk. x. 21, 27, and Lk. xx. 17, xxii. 61). "Behold !" said he, repeating his announcement of the previous evening, "the Lamb of God." It was a plain suggestion that they should approach Him and discover for themselves His hidden

* Or, *abidest*.

† That was two hours before night.

glory, and they obeyed ; and as they followed Him wonderingly, He suddenly turned and confronted them. It was an unforgettable moment both for Him and for them. He, says the Evangelist, not " saw " but " beheld them following." It is the same word as in ver. 32, and it denotes a great " spectacle." And truly nothing else for our Lord was the sight of those two wistful men ; for they were the first to seek Him as their Saviour, forerunners of the multitude which should thereafter believe in His name and own Him Lord. And for them it was an embarrassing moment. " What seek ye ? " He demanded ; and naturally supposing that He resented their intrusion they grasped at an excuse. " Rabbi," they faltered, giving Him the most honourable of Jewish titles, " where dwellest " or rather " abidest Thou ? " The word in the original signified specially " lodge," like a traveller in a wayside inn or a hospitable home (cf. Lk. xix. 5, xxiv. 29) ; and their pretext was that, recognising Him as a stranger there, they were kindly solicitous for His accommodation in the crowded hamlet. " Rabbi, where art Thou lodging ? " " Come," He answered, " and ye shall see."

And what was the lodging whither He conducted them ? In his quaint verses *The Dwelling-place* Henry Vaughan the Silurist thus debates the question :

What happy, secret fountain,
Fair shade, or mountain,
Whose undiscover'd virgin glory
Boasts it this day, though not in story,
Was then Thy dwelling ? did some cloud,
Fix'd to a tent, descend and shroud
My distress'd Lord ? or did a star,
Beckon'd by Thee, though high and far,
In sparkling smiles haste gladly down
To lodge light, and increase her own ?
My dear, dear God ! I do not know
What lodg'd Thee then, nor where, nor how
But I am sure Thou dost now come
Oft to a narrow, homely room,
Where Thou too hast but the least part ;
My God, I mean my sinful heart.

It would indeed be, as the poet suggests, nothing more than a " happy, secret fountain, fair shade, or mountain," some retreat

by the river's brink or on the hillside where, as He was afterwards wont in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed to God and laid Himself down to sleep wrapped in His mantle (cf. Lk. xxi. 37). And when they saw His poor estate, surely the two would doubt if He could indeed be "the Son of God," "the King of Israel."

But their doubt quickly vanished; and after his manner, while keeping silence regarding an experience so sacred and ineffable, the Evangelist expresses the marvel of it in a brief sentence of large suggestiveness. "They came therefore," he says, "and saw where He abode; and they abode with Him that day." And then he adds simply ("for" is lacking in the best manuscripts): "It was about the tenth hour." Observe what this means. In the other Gospels, according to the western fashion which reckoned the hours from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., "the tenth hour" would be 4 p.m. or, as our margin explains it, "two hours before night." But how then could the Evangelist say that "they abode with Him that day"? The truth is that throughout his Gospel, as will appear from time to time in the sequel (cf. iv. 6, xix. 14), St. John, as was natural and inevitable, writing as he did at Ephesus, followed not the western but the eastern horology which, like our own, reckoned from midnight to noon and from noon to midnight. This, Pliny states, was the Egyptian fashion; and not merely is it probable, in view of the interrelations of the Province with Alexandria, that it should have obtained also in Asia but there is no lack of direct attestation thereof. Thus, in the story of the martyrdom of Polycarp at Smyrna it is recorded that he suffered "at the eighth hour"; and since public spectacles were always exhibited early in the day, this means not 2 p.m. but 8 a.m.

See then what is here related. It was ten o'clock in the morning when Andrew and John accompanied Jesus to His abode; and "they abode with Him that day." The Evangelist tells nothing of that long day of communion and revelation, since it was too wonderful and solemn for words; but it was all engraven on his memory. The scene lived in his mind as he wrote some seventy years later. He remembered the very hour, the ever memorable hour when he found his Saviour. It is told

of the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorwaldsen, the son of a poor ship-carpenter, that there was no record of the day of his birth ; and once when he was questioned of it, he answered impatiently : " I do not know ; but I arrived at Rome on 8th March, 1797," reckoning the beginning of his artistic career as his true birthday, the beginning of his days.

2. BY SIMON PETER

i. 40-42

40 *One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.*

41 *He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, *the Christ.*

42 *And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, †A stone.*

AS yet his name was merely Simon, one of the commonest of Jewish names. Like his younger brother Andrew he was a Galilean fisherman, and there was a tender affection between them (cf. Mt. x. 2). See how this appears in the narrative before us. It is written that Andrew "*first findeth*"—implying that he searched for him (cf. vers. 43, 45, v. 14)—"his own brother Simon"; and here the manuscripts vary. In some "*first*" is an adverb; and so the meaning is that he sought and found his brother "in the first place"—before doing anything else or finding any other. In some again it is an adjective; and so the meaning is that he was "the first to find him," anticipating every one else in seeking him out and telling him the good news. On textual evidence, however, it is hardly doubtful that the authentic reading, differing little in the original from either of those variants, is the word elsewhere (cf. xviii. 28, xx. 1) rendered "*early*." See then what happened. It was late when Andrew and John returned, too late for them to tell the story. They went to rest; but with the wonder of the revelation in his mind Andrew slept little, and he was astir betimes. "He *early findeth* his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, 'We have found the Messiah!'" And therewith "he brought" or rather "led him to Jesus." He would be still

* Or, *the Anointed*.

† Or, *Peter*.

in the retreat where Andrew and John had spent yesterday with Him ; and like them Simon would at the first blush have difficulty in reconciling His lowliness with His high claims, but like them also he was soon persuaded, sooner indeed than they, since he was naturally impulsive, readily responding to an emotional appeal. He had no need to "abide with Him that day." It does not appear that the Lord had to converse with him or reason with him. Observe what is written : not "when Jesus beheld him, He said" but "Jesus looked upon him, and said." It is that phrase which we have already remarked (cf. ver. 36) as denoting a keen, searching gaze. It occurs again in St. Luke's story of Peter's denial where he tells (xxii. 61) how "the Lord turned, and looked upon him," fixing upon him, in reproach and pity, "those eyes of far perception." A look of that blessed face which angels behold with wonder—this was all, yet it sufficed. It melted Simon's heart now as it broke it afterwards.

Simon's behaviour was characteristic. In a warm, impulsive nature there are always incalculable possibilities alike of good and of evil ; and Jesus here reads him a gracious lesson and ministers to him an abiding incentive. It was the fashion of old that one who had achieved distinction should be accorded a designation commemorative thereof. Thus Jacob was called Israel ("one who striveth with God") when he had "striven with God and with men and prevailed" (Gen. xxxii. 28) ; and Scipio was styled Africanus for his triumph in Africa. Nor was it simply a commemoration but an incentive, admonishing the man to prove ever worthy of his past. And so Jesus gave Simon a new name : "Thou shalt be called Cephas"—the Aramaic of Peter which in Greek signified "the Rock"—a fitting name for one who was for his weak fellows as "a strong rock," as "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Simon indeed earned the designation in after days ; but the singularity here is that the Lord conferred it on him ere he had earned it, thus assuring him of His generous confidence, that thenceforward in his frequent hours of shame he might remember it and gird himself afresh to high endeavour. Trust is never forgotten and never unavailing. It is a lifelong inspiration. Is it amiss to recall here

that story of the Prophet of Arabia? "He never forgot this good Kadijah. Long afterwards, Ayesha his young favourite wife, a woman who indeed distinguished herself among the Moslem, by all manner of qualities, through her whole life; this young brilliant Ayesha was, one day, questioning him: 'Now am not I better than Kadijah? She was a widow; old, and had lost her looks: you love me better than you did her?' —'No, by Allah! She believed in me when none else would believe. In the whole world I had but one friend, and she was that!'"

And observe how at the same time He reveals to him the secret of victory. The name of the father of Simon and Andrew, otherwise unknown to fame, was John, the Hebrew *Johanan*, which signifies "The Lord is gracious." And so, when Jesus says "Thou art Simon, the son of Johanan," He tells him that only by the aids of grace would he prevail and prove himself "Cephas" indeed.

3. BY PHILIP AND NATHANAEL

i. 43-51

43 *The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.*

44 *Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.*

45 *Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*

46 *And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.*

47 *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!*

48 *Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.*

49 *Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.*

50 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.*

51 *And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.*

ST. JOHN was a literary artist. He had the rare art of telling a story, never wasting words and compelling interest by exciting curiosity. The story here is the "finding" of two other disciples. Observe the circumstances. It was "the day following" or rather "on the morrow" (cf. vers. 29, 35), and it was now time for our Lord to leave Bethabara and betake Himself to Galilee; not, however, to return home to Nazareth, since that was His home no longer now that He had been called to His public ministry, but, as the Evangelist presently shows,

to attend a wedding at the village of Cana. As it chanced, John, Andrew, and Simon were also bidden thereto, besides several others of the Galileans who had resorted to Bethsaida. It had been fixed for "the third day" (cf. ii. 1), that is, according to the inclusive reckoning of the ancients, the next day but one; and since it was a three days' journey and Jewish weddings were celebrated after nightfall (cf. Mt. xxv. 1-13), by leaving Bethabara in the morning He would reach Cana in time. Naturally the three newly won disciples travelled in His company; and it was as they were setting out that He won Philip.

With characteristic skill the Evangelist depicts the scene by a single word. "He *findeth* Philip." Consider what it means (cf. ver. 41). Philip was no stranger to our Lord. For he was an acquaintance of Andrew and Simon, and presumably also of John, since he was their fellow-townsmen—not, as our Version has it, "of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter" but "from Bethsaida of the city of Andrew and Peter." Elsewhere it appears that they belonged to Capernaum (cf. Mt. xvii. 24); and how is it that they are here said to have belonged to Bethsaida? There were two places so named, distinguished from each other as Bethsaida of Galilee (cf. xii. 21) and Bethsaida Julias. The latter, situated near the head of the Lake on the left side of the upper Jordan, was in Gaulanitis, and it was close by it that our Lord wrought His miracle of the feeding of the five thousand (cf. Lk. ix. 10). And where was the former—Bethsaida of Galilee? It was on the western shore of the Lake, and moreover it was indistinguishable from Capernaum; for in telling the story of that memorable miracle near Bethsaida Julias St. Mark says (cf. vi. 45) that the disciples crossed over thence "to the other side unto Bethsaida," while St. John says (cf. vi. 17) that they crossed over "unto Capernaum." The explanation is that the Galilean Bethsaida—"the House of Fish" or "Fishertown," as the name signifies—was the fisher-quarter of Capernaum; and so St. John with his wonted precision defines it when he writes here "from Bethsaida of" or rather, according to the proper signification of the preposition in the original, "part of the city of Andrew and Peter."

It was there at "Fishertown of Galilee" that the

fisher-disciples had their home. And they were all acquaintances. It would appear indeed that Andrew and Philip were close comrades (cf. vi. 5-8, xii. 21, 22). During the two days which had elapsed Andrew would tell his friend of his discovery and would gladly have "led him to Jesus" as he had led his brother Simon; but it would seem (cf. xiv. 8 and exposition of Mt. viii. 21, 22) that Philip was somewhat slow and backward, and though desirous had not the courage to approach the wonderful stranger. He was seeking Jesus without finding Him, and all the while, little as he knew it, Jesus was seeking him, fain to welcome him would he but approach. His eye was on him, and He would have him for His own; and that morning, as He was taking His departure with the three and saw him standing wistfully by, He claimed him. "He findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow Me."

Thus it was with Philip as with Blaise Pascal. He found Jesus because Jesus first found him. "'Be comforted,' said the Saviour; 'thou wouldst not be seeking Me hadst thou not already found Me.'" And no sooner had Jesus found him than he found another for Jesus. This was Nathanael who, as we have seen (cf. exposition of Mt. x. 3), was the Apostle commonly known by his patronymic Bartholomew, "the son of Talmai." They were friends, and since their homes lay apart—Philip's at Bethsaida and Nathanael's at Cana (cf. xxi. 2), it is likely that they had made each other's acquaintance at Bethabara through their common interest in the question of our Lord's Messiahship. They had discussed it during those bygone days; and while Philip believed the Baptist's testimony, Nathanael was restrained by perplexing considerations. His attitude is defined by our Lord's description of him (ver. 47) as not merely "a Jew," the antithesis in those days of "a Gentile," but "an Israelite," a son of wrestling Jacob (cf. Gen. xxxii. 28), "in whom was no guile." Observe that "guile" is in the original the same word which St. Paul uses when he speaks (2 Cor. iv. 2) of "handling the Word of God deceitfully," "beguiling the Word of God"; and it was precisely his immunity from this vice that made faith difficult for Nathanael. He had been impressed by the Baptist's testimony and by all that he had heard and seen of

Jesus, and on this score would have accepted Him as the Promised Saviour; but then what of the scriptural evidence? It was written, for example, that the Messiah would be "the King of Israel," and Jesus was only a Galilean peasant. Again it was written that the Messiah would be born at Bethlehem of Judæa (cf. Mt. ii. 4-6), and Jesus was from Nazareth in despised Galilee and, so far as Nathanael knew, had been born in that town so ill reputed for the character of its people. He would fain have believed, but he was confronted by what seemed to him the plain testimony of Scripture, and he would not "handle the Word of God deceitfully."

As a neighbour and perhaps a kinsman of the bride he too had been bidden to the wedding at Cana; and that he might travel alone, unvexed by disputation, he had set out early that morning. In the heat of the day he sat down to rest in the shade of a fig-tree by the wayside; and as he sat there Jesus and the four approached. Philip espied him, and recognising his friend he hailed him (cf. ver. 48) and ran ahead to tell him of his discovery. "Philip findeth Nathanael." Out of breath, as the broken sentence in the original shows, he jerked out the tidings: "Whom Moses in the Law wrote of—and the Prophets—we have found—Jesus the son of Joseph—Him from Nazareth!" Impatiently Philip retorted, quoting the proverbial characterisation of that town of ill repute: "Out of Nazareth can there be anything good?" "Come and see" answered Philip and led him back along the road. As they approached, "See," said Jesus to the three, "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." So precise a definition of his thoughts surprised Nathanael. "Whence," he exclaimed, "Thine understanding of me?" Observe the Lord's reply. "Ere Philip hailed thee when thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee," meaning not merely that He had espied him sooner than his friend but that all through those days of heart-searching at Bethabara His eye had been upon him in kindly and sympathetic understanding of his perplexity. This conquered Nathanael's doubt. "Rabbi," he cried, "Thou art 'the Son of God' (cf. exposition of iii. 17), Thou art 'the King of Israel'"—a full and emphatic confession of His Messiahship.

What was it that had convinced him? It was not alone the revelation of a love which had been seeking him all unknown but, as Philip had anticipated when, eschewing argument, he said "Come and see," the sight of that Blessed Face, that look which had won Simon (cf. ver. 42) and which evermore conquers the hearts of men.

One writ a plea for Faith, and put
His thoughts into a printed book ;
I read it that I might confute
My doubts, and all my faith it shook.

In trouble, then, and fear I sought
The Man who taught in Galilee,
And peace unto my soul was brought,
And all my faith came back to me.

It was no passing flush of emotion but the dawn of a conviction which time and larger experience of the Lord's grace would evermore confirm. And they would all share it. Turning to the others and including them in the promise, He told them what the future had in store for them of wonder and surprise. "Verily, verily (cf. Introduction, p. xxxviii) I say unto you, ye shall see the heaven opened and 'the angels of God ascending and descending upon' the Son of Man." It was a reference to Jacob's vision at Bethel of "a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reaching to heaven" (Gen. xxviii. 12); and here, observe, our Lord for the first time calls Himself by that name "the Son of Man" (see exposition of Mt. viii. 20). And they would well understand it. It was the incredulous phrase which had leaped to their lips when after the Baptist's announcement of His Messiahship they had looked upon Him and seen in Him to outward view no "Son of God," no "King of Israel," but "a man of low degree." And here is the discovery which had already dawned upon them and would shine ever clearer as they learned more of the mystery of His grace: Truly man as He was, "the Son of Man" sharing the uttermost weakness and distress of frail mortality, He was yet as truly God—God Incarnate, linking heaven and earth.

HIS FIRST MIRACLE

ii. I-II

1 *And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee ; and the mother of Jesus was there :*

2 *And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.*

3 *And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.*

4 *Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee ? mine hour is not yet come.*

5 *His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.*

6 *And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.*

7 *Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.*

8 *And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.*

9 *When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was : (but the servants which drew the water knew ;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,*

10 *And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine ; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse : but thou hast kept the good wine until now.*

11 *This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory ; and his disciples believed on him.*

CANA—"Cana of Galilee" as it was designated to distinguish it from another Cana in Phœnicia near Tyre—was a village some four or five miles north-east of Nazareth. The evening after nightfall was the time for Jewish weddings (cf. Mt. xxv. 1-13), and the scene was usually the house of the

bride's parents, though the bridegroom provided the wedding-feast (cf. vers. 9, 10; Jud. xiv. 10). Not only Mary but her whole household, the Lord's "brethren" (cf. ver. 12; see exposition of Mt. xii. 46-50), were among the guests; and as she had the management of the feast, it would seem that she was a near relative of the bride's family. Since he belonged to Cana, it was natural that Nathanael should be present, if only as a neighbour; but how came it that the other four disciples were there? It is written (ver. 12) that after the wedding not only His disciples but Mary and His brethren went down to Capernaum with our Lord; and if their errand was to escort the couple to their home, it would follow that the bridegroom belonged there, and the four fisher disciples would attend the wedding as his friends. It is evident that they were poor folk, since not merely were they scantily supplied with wine but "the servants" (ver. 5) were not domestic slaves but, as the word in the original signifies, "attendants," doubtless friends who like Mary performed the officé.

Though only a merry-making in a peasant home in an obscure village, that wedding-feast merited a place in the sacred record, inasmuch as it was there that our Lord wrought the first of His miracles or rather "signs," as the word which St. John always employs properly signifies, denoting that they were not mere marvels but revelations, manifestations of His hidden grace. "This as a beginning of His signs did Jesus at Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him." Already indeed they had believed, but this fresh revelation—one of those "greater things" which He had promised that they would see—confirmed and enlarged their faith. The occasion was that "they wanted wine" or rather "their wine had failed," the scanty supply had run short. Since Mary had charge of the feast, she perceived the strait; and kindly solicitous for the bridegroom's credit she privately told Jesus. It was natural that she should thus, after her wont, turn to her "first-born son" who had been better than a husband to her all those years in their home at Nazareth; but plainly she had now a novel motive. She must have heard, if only from the five disciples on their arrival, something of the

happenings at Bethabara ; and this with her quickened remembrance of the wonder of His birth would enlarge her expectation.

"They have no wine" she whispered to Him ; and this was all she said. Was it all she meant to say, content that He should know their need and confident that He would meet it ? Or was it, as would rather appear from the sequel, that when she was about to crave His intervention, He cut her appeal short with His abrupt rejoinder ? In either case this must have smitten her like a blow. For mark His words. He had been accustomed to call her "mother," but now He styles her "woman." It was not indeed a discourteous address, since according to Greek usage it was much like our "madam." Yet it was a pointed departure from His wonted tenderness ; and He made it deliberately. It was an incisive intimation of the difference which His call had made. He had embarked on His Messianic ministry ; and thenceforward He owned no human kinship. He was the Eternal Son of God, and He stood to all the human race in a spiritual relationship (cf. exposition of Mt. xii. 46-50). And what of His question ? Our Version has it : "What have I to do with thee ?" but this ill expresses it. It was a colloquialism alike in Hebrew and in Greek ; but whereas with the Greeks it was a contemptuous repulse, signifying : "What have you and I in common ? Don't meddle with matters which you don't understand and have nothing to do with" as in the proverb "What has an ass to do with a lyre ?" with the Jews it was a remonstrance against untimely and vexatious intrusion : "Why do you trouble me ?" (cf. 2 Sam. xvi. 10 ; 1 Ki. xvii. 18).

So the phrase meant on our Lord's lips ; and thus understood it reveals the thought of His heart. Here, as in the wilderness when He was tempted forty days of the Devil (cf. exposition of Mt. iv. 1-11), He was pondering the exercise of His Messianic ministry. The question was whether this were a fitting occasion for the putting forth of His yet untried miraculous power ; and Mary's intrusion, her unspoken suggestion, was, as it were, a premature forcing of His hand. "Why trouble Me, woman ?" said He. "Not yet is Mine hour come." Vexed by the repulse, she still clung to her assurance of His

ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own : for he is a liar, and the father of it.

45 *And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.*

46 *Which of you convinceth me of sin ? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me ?*

47 *He that is of God heareth God's words : ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.*

48 *Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil ?*

49 *Jesus answered, I have not a devil ; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.*

50 *And I seek not mine own glory : there is one that seeketh and judgeth.*

51 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*

52 *Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets ; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.*

53 *Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead ? and the prophets are dead : whom makest thou thyself ?*

54 *Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing : it is my Father that honoureth me ; of whom ye say, that he is your God :*

55 *Yet ye have not known him ; but I know him : and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you : but I know him, and keep his saying.*

56 *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day : and he saw it, and was glad.*

57 *Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham ?*

58 *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*

59 *Then took they up stones to cast at him : but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.*

OBSERVE that this narrative is not the immediate sequel of the last. It is another in the series of incidents by which the Evangelist illustrates the progress of our Lord's ministry at Jerusalem, and it is separated from the last by some interval of time. And who were the persons that now appear on the scene? They are defined as, not "those Jews which *believed on Him*," but "the Jews who had *believed Him*"; and the distinction is very significant. According to the Greek idiom to "believe in Him" (cf. ver. 30) or otherwise "believe on Him" denoted the whole-hearted surrender of faith; whereas to "believe Him" meant merely a recognition of the truth of His statements and the justice of His reasoning. And thus those men had only taken the first step toward discipleship. Their minds assented, but their hearts were not yet won; and the Evangelist here tells how the Lord sought to lead them on from mere belief to faith. They were "Jews," that is, rulers (cf. i. 19); and that they were Pharisees and not, as in the previous instance, Sadducees is evident from their Rabbinical argumentation. Moreover, while many Pharisees were well disposed toward Him in the days of His flesh (cf. Introduction, p. xxi) and not a few, like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa, subsequently took their places in the ranks of His disciples (cf. Ac. xv. 5), it does not appear that He ever won a single Sadducee. And where was the scene of the conference? It was within the precincts of the Temple (cf. ver. 59); but it was not the Temple-court. For it is written that at the close of the conference "they took up stones to cast at Him," and there were no loose stones in the paved court. At that time Herod's magnificent Temple, begun forty-eight years ago (cf. ii. 20), was still incomplete; and if, as appears in the course of the narrative, the conference was held in the evening when the day's work was done, it is likely that our Lord conducted those inquirers from the Temple-court to the now deserted scene of operations and conversed with them amid the litter of masonry.

The Evangelist does not report the conversation at length, but begins at the critical point where dissension arose. Our Lord allowed that in "believing Him" those Pharisees had made a good beginning. But it was only a beginning, and He

intervention, and she bade the attendants do whatever He might direct.

Presently He decided the question, and then "His hour had come." By the doorway were ranged six large jars which had held the water required for the washing of the guests' feet on their arrival (cf. Lk. vii. 44) and the ceremonial ablution of their hands before eating (cf. Mk. vii. 2, 3). They were empty now that they had served their uses, and He bade the attendants replenish them. They hastened to the well and drew water (ver. 9; cf. iv. 7), and filled the jars therewith; and, mindful of Mary's admonition, they did it with a will, "filling them up to the brim." And then He bade them draw it off in flagons and carry it to "the ruler of the feast," the *magister convivii* or *arbiter bibendi* as the Latins called him—a guest who, according to the ancient custom, was chosen by lot to "conduct the symposium" and keep good order (cf. Eccclus. xxxii. 1, 2). It was water, as the attendants knew, that they had poured into the jars; but it was wine when they drew it thence, and most excellent wine when it reached the lips of the company. And the Evangelist, who was there and heard it, recounts in proof thereof a merry jest of the ruler of the feast. On tasting the fresh wine he hailed the bridegroom and rallied him on his inversion of the common order. It was the fashion for a host to serve the good wine first, and then, when the palates of his guests were dulled, the inferior sort: "but thou hast kept the good wine until now."

Observe the generosity of the miracle. The six jars were filled up to the brim, and each of them contained three firkins, some twenty-seven gallons. It was vastly more than the company required that night; but wine was a necessity in a country where water was scanty and unwholesome save in the brief rainy season. And thus it was a right welcome gift that our Lord bestowed on those poor folk when He left them with so large a store of wine, and wine of a quality beyond their means to purchase.

It was truly a fitting inauguration of His miraculous ministry; and the story is worthy of a place in the sacred record, inasmuch as it well exemplifies and illustrates the nature

of all the wonderful works which He wrought and the essential difference betwixt them and heathen magic (cf. exposition of Mt. iv. 2-4). For what is a miracle? According to Hume, it is "a violation of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposing of an invisible agent"; and on the basis of this widely accepted definition it is easy to demonstrate the impossibility of miracle in an orderly world, whether one believe in a personal Deity or no. On the materialistic view the laws of nature are absolute and all-sufficing, and their operation is unchallengeable; on the pantheistic view also miracles, in the sense of violations of natural law, are impossible since, as Spinoza has it, "there is no transcendental beginning; for God and nature are one from eternity to eternity"; while on a theistic view the laws of nature are God's modes of operation or, in Martineau's phrase, "His personal habits": they are expressions of His eternal and immutable will, and their violation by His own volition is a contradiction in terms.

But is it a true definition? It is indeed as false as it could well be; and the fallacy lies in its notion of "nature." What did Hume mean by nature? He meant, as Huxley put it, "the sum of phenomena presented to our experience; the totality of events past, present, and to come." Thus nature would be commensurate with our experience; and what is this but the Pythagorean *homo mensura*—"man is the measure of all things"? In truth "the sum of phenomena presented to our experience" is not nature but merely nature as we know it. Nature transcends our comprehension; and ere we are justified in pronouncing miracle impossible, we must ascertain that, in St. Augustine's phrase, it is indeed "contrary to nature" and not merely "contrary to nature as we know it."

View it thus. The Universe, as we know it, is a succession of kingdoms—kingdom above kingdom, each transcending and consummating the last. The basis is the kingdom of inorganic matter—matter without life or structure; then the vegetable kingdom, where there is life but only unconscious life; next the animal kingdom, where there is not merely life but conscious life; and finally the human kingdom, where there

is not merely conscious life but reason. Each realm has its own laws, operating unvaryingly and producing necessary and constant results ; but it is always possible for the laws of a higher realm to invade a lower. And then they do not violate or supersede the laws of the lower realm ; they co-operate with these, and their co-operation produces results which the lower laws are by themselves incapable of producing.

Take the realm of inorganic matter. In this there is no life, nor can it of itself produce life. That life may appear there it must come, as our Lord has taught us (Jo. iii. 3), "from above" by the intrusion of the laws of the superior realm. And so in countless ways it is continually coming to pass before our eyes. Look at the work of irrigation—how, when the parched ground becomes a pool and the thirsty land springs of water, the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. There we see the invasion of the inorganic realm by the laws of the organic ; and, viewed from beneath, the result is a miracle.

Look, again, at the vegetable kingdom. In flowering plants fertilisation is effected through the conveyance of the pollen from stamen to ovary by the bees and other insects which visit them to suck their sweetness. And has not Darwin shown how vegetation would cease from the face of the earth were it not for the earth-worms which by their burrowing loosen the crust and cast up ever fresh soil ? These are examples of the invasion of the vegetable by the operation of the animal kingdom, the intrusion of the laws of a higher realm into a lower, producing results which those of the lower could not of themselves produce.

And look, finally, at the animal kingdom. It is a significant observation of Bacon in his essay *Of Atheisme* that to his dog a man is "instead of a God or *Melior Natura*." Indeed to all the lower animals human operations are generally inexplicable. When a child casts a stone into a pool, what a strange and affrighting phenomenon the disturbance of their element must be to its population of frogs and newts ! From their point of view it is a miracle—something "supernatural."

None of these things seems miraculous to us, forasmuch as

we occupy a superior realm and view them all from above ; but if there be a realm above our own, then surely its operations may invade our realm. And the result will be in our view a miracle. It will be no violation of natural laws as we know them, but merely the result of the co-operation therewith of the laws of a higher realm. It was no violation of natural law when the Lord from Heaven turned water into wine, but rather, as St. Augustine justly insists, an acceleration of that continual miracle—the conversion of the dew and the rain into the rich juice of the ripe grape-clusters. To deny the possibility of miracle is to adopt the philosophy of the frogs and newts which account their pool the Universe.

PERIOD OF INITIAL SUCCESS

ii. 12-iv

AT THE PASSOVER (ii. 12-iii. 21)

I. CLEARING THE TEMPLE-COURT

ii. 12-17

12 *After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples : and they continued there not many days.*

13 *And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,*

14 *And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting :*

15 *And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen ; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables ;*

16 *And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence ; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.*

17 *And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.*

IF it was to escort the bride and bridegroom to their home that Mary and His brethren went down to Capernaum, it was natural that Jesus should accompany them ; but He had a further reason, inasmuch as He had chosen Capernaum as the headquarters of His Galilean ministry (see exposition of Mt. iv. 12-16) and He would go thither to arrange for His settlement. He remained but a few days, since the Feast of the Passover, falling that year (26 A.D.) on March 21, was at hand ; and thither He must repair, not alone because attendance was the duty of every devout Jew but that He might present Himself as the Messiah at once to the rulers and citizens of the Sacred Capital and to the multitude of worshippers assembled from near and far. He had planned a dramatic entrance on the scene. It was a scandal of long standing, already deplored by a

late prophet (cf. Zech. xiv. 21 R.V. marg.), that at the holy season the outer court of the Temple was converted by the greedy priests into a market-place, where sacrificial victims—lambs for the paschal sacrifice, oxen for the thankoffering (cf. exposition of xviii. 28), and doves for the poor women's offering of purification (cf. Lk. ii. 24)—were exposed for sale, and the money-changers did their business with worshippers from foreign lands. Year after year when He went up to the Feast He had witnessed the desecration ; and He had determined that now by a stern act of reformation He would publicly proclaim His Messianic mission. It facilitated His purpose that the rulers were impressed by the Baptist's testimony (cf. i. 19-28) and durst not oppose Him ; and here lies a conclusive evidence that the incident happened now as St. John records and not during the Passion-week where it is placed by the earlier Evangelists (cf. Introduction, p. xxxiv). It is indeed true that then by His triumphal entry He made a public demonstration no less impressive ; but, though protected by the enthusiasm of the multitude, it would have been impossible for Him then, when the rulers were His avowed enemies and had decreed His death, thus to invade the sacred precincts. He would have been at the mercy of the Temple-guards, and would have been immediately arrested.

On His arrival He went straight to the Temple-court, and "found" the desecration in busy progress. It was no chance discovery. As the word implies throughout St. John's narrative (cf. i. 41), He "found" it because He looked for it. Observe the picturesqueness of the narrative, stamping it as the story of an eye-witness. Though both our Versions ignore the distinction, there are in the original two words for "money-changers." One means "changers" in the sense of givers of change (ver. 14) ; and the other is literally "discounters" (ver. 15) from a Phœnician word denoting *agio* or "rate of exchange." Thus vividly the Evangelist sets the sordid scene before our eyes—the shrill chaffering over change and discount and our Lord's indignant intervention. We see Him snatching up some cast-off tethers and hastily weaving them into a whip and "driving them all out of the Temple, both the sheep and the oxen"

(R.V.)—not, as our Version suggests, the men, since they had a right to be there. In the stampede the tables of the discounters were overturned, and their “money,” properly their “small change,” was scattered over the pavement. Observe how gently He dealt with the poor folk’s offerings—the timid doves fluttering in their cages. “Take,” said He, or more precisely “Take up and bear these things hence”—the word used of “the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world” (i. 29), taking it upon Himself and bearing it away.

He interpreted His action when He added : “Make not My Father’s House an house of merchandise,” thus affirming His Messiahship, since “the Son of God” was a Messianic title (see exposition of Mt. iii. 17). Nor did His disciples miss His meaning ; for, says St. John, quoting their whispered comment on the scene, it brought to their remembrance that Messianic scripture (Ps. lxix. 9) : “The zeal of Thine House hath eaten Me up.” So the Psalmist had written, but the true reading here is “shall eat Me up,” marking their recognition of the scripture as prophetic.

2. CHALLENGE OF THE RULERS

ii. 18-22

18 *Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things ?*

19 *Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*

20 *Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days ?*

21 *But he spake of the temple of his body.*

22 *When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them ; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.*

NEITHER was His purpose hidden from the rulers or, as St. John styles them after his wont (cf. i. 19), "the Jews," meaning here more particularly the Priests. Naturally aggrieved by His invasion of their precincts yet restrained by the possibility that He might indeed, as the Baptist had declared, be the Messiah, they approached Him in all courtesy and craved of Him a "sign" in attestation of His Messianic claim—a reasonable request from their point of view, since it was anticipated that the Messiah would be a wonder-worker (cf. vii. 31). It was a repetition of the Tempter's suggestion in the wilderness that He should precipitate Himself from the Pinnacle of the Temple in sight of the wondering multitude (cf. Mt. iv. 5-7) ; and as He had rejected it then, so He rejects it now. He granted them a sign indeed but in no wise the sort which they craved. "Destroy this sanctuary," said He, "and in three days I will raise it up." Not, observe, "this Temple" but "this sanctuary." Signifying properly in the original "a dwelling place" or "habitation," the word was used in the first place of "the Sanctuary" *par excellence*, the hallowed shrine situated in the inner court of the Temple with its two chambers,

the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, the place of God's Presence, where of old the *Shekinah* had overshadowed the Mercy-seat (see exposition of i. 14). But it was also used figuratively of the body, forasmuch as the body is at once the shrine of the soul and the habitation of the Indwelling Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17, vi. 19 ; 2 Cor. vi. 16 R.V. marg.).

It is the latter sense that our Lord here intends. "He spake of the sanctuary of His body"; and the sign of His Messiahship which He gave the rulers was His Resurrection which, when it came to pass, "defined Him 'the Son of God' in power" (Rom. i. 4). Here emerges a fact attested not alone by St. John but by the earlier Evangelists (cf. Mt. ix. 15 ; Mk. ii. 19, 20 ; Lk. v. 34, 35)—that when our Lord entered on His brief public ministry He already foresaw its tragic issue and its ultimate triumph. It was not in vain that He had passed those thirty years in the obscurity of Nazareth, awaiting His call. They had been a time of preparation, discipline, and revelation ; and from the day when, a boy of twelve, He realised His divine kinship (see exposition of Lk. ii. 41-52), He had by communion with His Father, meditation on the prophetic scriptures, and the illumination of the Holy Spirit been discovering ever more and more of the mission which He had come to fulfil and the work which had been given Him to do. At every step of His progress the shadow of the Cross and the glory which should follow lay upon His path.

At that early date His dark saying was unintelligible to His disciples, who indeed all the while He was with them proved themselves slow of heart in receiving His frequent premonitions. It was not until it was fulfilled that they understood it and rejoiced in its confirmation of their faith. And what marvel that it was hidden from the rulers ? They took "sanctuary" in their accustomed sense and construed His words as a sacrilegious vaunt, remembering them and bringing them up against Him at His trial three years later (cf. Introduction, p. xxxiii). Observe their astonished remonstrance : "Forty and six years was this sanctuary in building, and thou—wilt thou raise it up in three days ?" It is one of the few chronological data which the Gospels supply. It was in the year 20 B.C. that the building of Herod's Temple was begun ; and hence it was now the year 26 A.D.

3. INTERVIEW WITH NICODEMUS

ii. 23-iii. 21

23 *Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.*

24 *But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men,*

25 *And needed not that any should testify of man : for he knew what was in man.*

1 *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews :*

2 *The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God : for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*

3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born *again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

4 *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old ? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born ?*

5 *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

6 *That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

7 *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born *again.*

8 *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

9 *Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be ?*

* Or, from above.

10 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things ?*

11 *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen ; and ye receive not our witness.*

12 *If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things ?*

13 *And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*

14 *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up :*

15 *That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

17 *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world ; but that the world through him might be saved.*

18 *He that believeth on him is not condemned : but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

19 *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

20 *For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be *reproved.*

21 *But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

THROUGHOUT the Holy Week—not, as our Version has it, “in the feast day” but “during the Feast”—our Lord engaged in a busy ministry. Its chief scene would be the outer court of the Temple, where He discoursed to the multitude which frequented that place of public resort, and also wrought miracles among them, thus confirming in the general estimation the claim which He had so strikingly advanced. It seemed an abounding success, yet it was far

* Or, *discovered*.

otherwise in His judgment. Already He was experiencing the mischievousness of the prevailing ideal of the Messiah and His work ; and He recognised how worthless was all that enthusiasm, inspired as it was by the expectation of a national deliverance and a restoration of the ancient kingdom of Israel. See how His dissatisfaction is here expressed in a sentence difficult to render into English by reason of the idiomatic phrasing of the original : “ Many admitted His name ”—His title of Messiah—“ beholding His signs which he was doing ; but on His part Jesus would not commit Himself unto them, forasmuch as He could read all, and because He had no need that any one should testify of man ; for He would Himself read what was in man.”

There was, however, another side to the picture ; and this the Evangelist displays, though our Version obliterates the sharp antithesis of the original. “ But,” he proceeds, pointing the contrast, “ there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.” Observe this designation. Nicodemus was, in the first place, “ a ruler,” which means that he was a member of the Sanhedrin ; and further he belonged not merely to the party of the Pharisees but to their learned order of Scribes or Rabbis whose business was the conservation and interpretation of the Sacred Law (cf. ver. 10)—a venerable man (cf. ver. 4) and, though naturally wedded to his traditions and somewhat inaccessible to new ideas, yet, as his conduct here and hereafter proves, kindly, devout, and reasonable. It was not on his own account that he sought our Lord ; for when St. John styles him “ a man of the Pharisees,” he means not merely that Nicodemus belonged to that party but that he was its delegate (cf. i. 24). He was not, like those Priests and Levites who had waited on the Baptist at Bethabara (cf. i. 19), deputed by the Sanhedrin. Our Lord’s invasion of the Temple-precincts and His dealing with their priestly representatives had aggrieved the Sadducean party, and it was his Pharisaic colleagues that deputed Nicodemus. Impressed by the Baptist’s testimony, by His own startling claim, and by His ministry in the city, they were perplexed what attitude they should adopt toward Him ; and so they despatched a

delegate to interview Him and ascertain the truth from His own lips. Unwilling to compromise themselves, they shunned publicity ; and therefore it is and not from cowardice that Nicodemus " came to Jesus by night." And what was the scene of the interview? Our Lord had no dwelling in Jerusalem, and whenever He resorted thither, He and His disciples passed the night in the open, latterly at all events in the Garden of Gethsemane on the slope of Mount Olivet ; and it may have been there that Nicodemus sought Him. At any rate it was in the open that they conversed, with the soft breeze fanning their faces and rustling in the boughs overhead (cf. ver. 8).

Nicodemus begins by stating his errand ; and it is significant that though himself a Rabbi and naturally jealous of his professional dignity, he accords this most honourable title to a Galilean peasant who had graduated in no school of learning. It was indeed the fashion for His disciples and the multitude so to address Him (cf. i. 38, 49, iv. 31 R.V., vi. 25, ix. 2, xi. 8 R.V.; Mt. xxvi. 25, 49 R.V. ; Mk. ix. 5, x. 51, xiv. 45 R.V.); but this is the solitary instance on record where the title was given Him by a ruler, and it evinces how profoundly not only Nicodemus but his colleagues had been impressed. He states his errand on their behalf as well as his own : "*We know.*" Our Lord's " signs " had convinced them that He was " a teacher come from God." Of so much they were assured ; and Nicodemus is about to state the further question which they were debating—whether He were not indeed the Messiah, the prophetic King of Israel—when our Lord interrupts him and presents as the immediate and vital issue the personal question of each man's relation to God and His quickening grace : "*Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*"

The ensuing colloquy turns upon the word rendered " again " ; and here, as in the encounter between our Lord and the priests in the Temple-court (cf. ii. 18-21), there is a play of cross purposes by reason of a verbal ambiguity. In the original the word signified literally " from above," and so naturally " from Heaven " " from God " (cf. iii. 31, xix. 11 ; Ja. i. 17, iii. 15, 17) ; but from its use of tracking a stream " from its source,"

“from the very beginning” (cf. Lk. i. 3), it came to signify “over again,” “anew,” “a second time” (cf. Gal. iv. 9). It was the former sense that our Lord intended. “Except,” said He, “a man be born from above—born of God” (cf. i. 13); but the thought was strange to Nicodemus, and he took Him to mean “born again,” “born a second time,” thinking perhaps of the Oriental idea of reincarnation.

Patiently our Lord sought to make His meaning clear. For the ambiguous phrase He substituted “born of water and of the Spirit,” explaining that it was not physical but spiritual birth that was in question. Nicodemus should have understood, since our Lord here refers to the Baptist’s message which had of late been so largely discussed. John had preached “the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins” (Mk. i. 4). Repentance was the condition of forgiveness; and in token of their forgiveness he had baptised his penitents with water. At the same time he had recognised that more was needed. It is not enough that sinners be “purged from their old sins.” Their affections must be renewed that they may henceforth hate sin and be for ever done with it. In theological phrase they must be not only justified but sanctified. And since sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit, the Baptist pointed his hearers forward to the Coming Saviour who would complete the work which he had begun. “I indeed have baptised you with water; but He shall baptise you with the Holy Spirit” (Mk. i. 8).

Here is a full salvation—not repentance alone but confession and the remission which confession wins; and not remission alone but recreation. And recreation is the work of the Holy Spirit, the *Creator Spiritus*. See how our Lord after His wont illustrates the high truth by a parable. Alike in Hebrew and Greek and Latin the same word denoted “breath” and “spirit” and “wind”; and as they sat in the garden, the soft night-breeze, laden with the fragrance of far-off fields, was fanning their brows and singing on its way through the leafage, leaving life and health as it passed. There was a parable not for Nicodemus alone but for the disciples too. “Marvel not that I said unto thee ‘Ye must be born from above.’ The breath breatheth where it will, and thou hearest

its voice, but knowest not whence it cometh and where it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Breath."

It was lost on the old Rabbi: so difficult is it for a new thought to penetrate the encrustation of years. "Nearly all men past a moderate age," said Darwin, "either in actual years or in mind are, I am fully convinced, incapable of looking at facts under a new point of view." And again: "What a good thing it would be if every scientific man was to die when sixty years old, as afterwards he would be sure to oppose all new doctrines." "How can these things be?" faltered Nicodemus. Such dullness in a Rabbi surprised and grieved our Lord. "Art thou the teacher of Israel, and perceivest not these things?" If the teacher were so slow of heart, what might be expected of his scholars, the people whom He had come to win? But here a welcome reassurance was vouchsafed Him. The eager faces of His disciples, those young Galileans, met His eye, showing Him that they had understood and reminding Him how receptive they had already proved themselves. They were a reproach to Nicodemus. "Verily, verily I say unto thee, it is what we know that we"—they and He—"are speaking, and what we have seen that we are testifying; and ye"—Nicodemus and his colleagues—"receive not our testimony." If he was so blind to the significance of earthly things like the wind, no wonder if he missed high heavenly truths.

Undeterred by His visitor's dullness, our Lord spoke on; but the report of His further discourse is very meagre. The initial colloquy, so vivid and arresting, would imprint itself on the Evangelist's memory; but the rest, novel as it was to him and his companions at that early stage, would be difficult for them to comprehend, and he has written here only a bare outline. What were the themes on which our Lord dwelt? First (ver. 13) He spoke of Himself, declaring who He was—"the Son of Man" (cf. i. 51), sharing the ills of frail humanity, yet a Divine Visitant who had come down from Heaven to reveal its unimagined glory to the hungry hearts of the children of men ("which is in Heaven," omitted by the best authorities, is probably a theological assimilation to i. 18). Then (vers. 14-17)

He spoke of His mission. It was a mission of mercy to a world perishing like the Israelites of old when they were bitten by the serpents in the wilderness (Num. xxi. 6-9). "It was as a physician," says St. Chrysostom, "and not as a judge that He had come"; and His mission revealed the heart of God, since it was on God's errand that He had come. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son (cf. i. 14, 18; the same phrase as in Lk. vii. 12, viii. 42, ix. 38; Heb. xi. 17), that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish but have eternal life." Observe the word "so." Does it mean "to such an extent" or "in such a manner"? It may mean either. Perhaps indeed it means both, telling us at once how far God's love reached, shrinking not even from that uttermost sacrifice, and yet how wise it was. It was no facile amnesty. God loved the world too well to grant an unrighteous pardon. Such is the constitution of our moral nature that, as Plato observed, it is better for a wrong-doer to suffer for the wrong than to get off scot-free. There is no peace without expiation; and therefore, because He loved the world so well, God in the person of His only Son took the burden of its ill-deserving upon Himself. And finally (vers. 18-21) He spoke of the world's responsibility—the guilt of rejecting His message. As He spoke, the day was breaking; and here He found another parable. "This is the condemnation, that the light hath come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light." "For light and lust are deadly enemies."

THE BAPTIST'S LATEST TESTIMONY

iii. 22-36

22 *After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judæa ; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.*

23 *And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there : and they came, and were baptized.*

24 *For John was not yet cast into prison.*

25 *Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.*

26 *And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.*

27 *John answered and said, A man can *receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.*

28 *Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.*

29 *He that hath the bride is the bridegroom : but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice : this my joy therefore is fulfilled.*

30 *He must increase, but I must decrease.*

31 *He that cometh from above is above all : he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth : he that cometh from heaven is above all.*

32 *And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth ; and no man receiveth his testimony.*

33 *He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.*

34 *For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God : for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.*

* Or, take unto himself.

35 *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.*

36 *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life : and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

HEREWITH closed our Lord's first ministry at Jerusalem. It was to keep the Passover that He had gone thither ; and now that the Holy Week was ended, He must betake Himself northward and address Himself to His Galilean ministry. But not immediately, since He had need of a season of repose, meditation, and communion. For His experience during that momentous week had not merely exhausted His strength but discouraged His heart. The popular applause, inspired as it was by a false ideal, had jarred upon Him and forewarned Him of future embarrassment in the prosecution of His Messianic work ; and though in truth His reasoning had lodged like good seed in the old Rabbi's mind and bore fruit after many days, it seemed at the moment as though His interview with Nicodemus were the crown of His ill success. Ere beginning His Galilean ministry He needed rest and still more consideration of the method which He should thenceforward pursue. And where could He find a peaceful retreat ? It is written that, on leaving Jerusalem, instead of travelling northward He went with His five disciples "into the land of Judæa," finding the solitude which He desired outside the crowded city but within the confines of the southern province. Where was the spot ? The Evangelist does not name it, but he plainly indicates it when he states that He not only "tarried" there but "baptised." For where in that arid land, especially now that the Passover had come and gone and the season of drought had set in, was there sufficient water for the administration of the rite save at Bethabara, the Ford of the Jordan ? A little ago indeed, when John was preaching there and the place was thronged with an eager multitude, it afforded no seclusion ; but the Evangelist explains that John was no longer there. It was not, as might appear from a hasty perusal of the earlier narratives, especially St. Luke's (cf. iii. 19, 20),

that he had already been cast into prison ; but the growing hostility of the rulers had so embarrassed him that he had quitted Judæa and retreated northward beyond their jurisdiction to a well-watered place called Ænon or " Springs " in Samaria eight Roman miles, as St. Jerome states, south of Scythopolis. Thus it came to pass that Bethabara had resumed its normal quietude ; and thither our Lord now betakes Himself, that on the hallowed scene where He had heard His call, He may renew His consecration and take counsel with God on the work which had been given Him to do.

His repose was ere long interrupted. It appears from the sequel that He tarried at Bethabara over a month ; and when tidings of His presence there reached Jerusalem, the people trooped down to Him. He could not deny them the grace which they sought, and He won the faith of many, more than ever John had won. They were baptised ; but the Evangelist is careful to explain (cf. iv. 1, 2) that it was not Jesus but His disciples who administered the rite, following here the example of their former master. He took no part in the work, since He contemplated the institution of a better sacrament when the time came ; but meanwhile He permitted it as a salutary dispensation.

And what meanwhile was transpiring at Ænon ? There the Baptist was preaching his old message of repentance with the addition that the Messiah had already come. He had left behind him the disciples whom he had won in Judæa, but he soon won others at Ænon ; and the Evangelist here interrupts his story of our Lord to relate an incident there. " There arose a questioning on the part of John's disciples with the Jews about purification." In St. John's parlance " the Jews " signified the rulers (cf. i. 19) ; and here the best authenticated reading is " a Jew." Plainly he was an emissary of the Sanhedrin who had come down from Jerusalem to spy upon the Baptist ; and it appears that he was a representative of the Pharisees, since, like the deputies who had previously waited upon him at Bethabara (cf. i. 25), he raised the Pharisaic question of ceremonial ablution, challenging John's right to administer his rite of baptism. He prudently addressed himself not to

the Baptist but to his disciples, and taunted them with the waning of their master's popularity, telling them of the crowds which were gathering round Jesus at Bethabara and thus suggesting that they had attached themselves to a dying cause. Their simple minds were disquieted, and they appealed to John.

Here the prophet displays at once his true greatness and his serene faith. He told his troubled followers that the success of our Lord proved His divine commission ; and so far from displeasing him it gladdened his heart. Had he not told them that he was not himself the Messiah but merely His herald ? And our Lord's success justified his declaration that He was the Messiah. It was a fulfilment of the prophetic vision of the Heavenly Bridegroom's espousal of His Bride (cf. Is. liv. 1-6 ; Hos. ii. 14-20) ; and should not he, who had served as the groomsman, rejoice in the Bridegroom's joy (cf. Mt. ix. 15 and Introduction, p. xxxiii) ? He had now discharged his office ; his work was done ; and he would have his disciples join in acclaiming Him whose words and works approved His divine mission. " He that hath received His testimony hath set his seal to it that God is true." And rejection thereof were impiety, incurring the forfeiture of eternal life and the visitation of eternal wrath.

Mark the awful close : " The Father loveth the Son (i.e., the Messiah ; cf. exposition of Mt. iii. 17), and hath put all things in His hand. He that believeth in the Son hath eternal life ; while he that disbelieveth the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." It is a sentence of the stern Jewish prophet ; and as one reads it, one recalls the gracious words of our Blessed Lord on the previous page (ver. 17) : " God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him." It is not God that condemns but unbelief ; and the self-condemned sinner is an object not of His wrath but of His undying pity. Was it to mark the contrast that the Evangelist interrupted his narrative to introduce this the Baptist's last testimony ? Whether he designed it or not, there the contrast stands, exemplifying the wide difference betwixt the old order

and the new. The Gospel is the revelation of " the Love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord " ; and while He has proclaimed with unapproached solemnity the guilt and ruin of rejecting it, that phrase " the wrath of God " was never once, so far as the record goes, heard from His gracious lips.

Not to condemn the sons of men
The Son of God appear'd ;
No weapons in His hand are seen,
Nor voice of terror heard.
He came to raise our fallen state,
And our lost hopes restore :
Faith leads us to the Mercy-seat,
And bids us fear no more.

ON THE WAY TO CAPERNAUM (iv)

I. AT JACOB'S WELL

iv. 1-26

1 *When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,*

2 *(Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)*

3 *He left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee.*

4 *And he must needs go through Samaria.*

5 *Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.*

6 *Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well : and it was about the sixth hour.*

7 *There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water : Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.*

8 *(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)*

9 *Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria ? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.*

10 *Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink ; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.*

11 *The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep : from whence then hast thou that living water ?*

12 *Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle ?*

13 *Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again :*

14 *But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

15 *The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.*

16 *Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.*

17 *The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband :*

18 *For thou hast had five husbands ; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband : in that saidst thou truly.*

19 *The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.*

20 *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain ; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.*

21 *Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.*

22 *Ye worship ye know not what : we know what we worship : for salvation is of the Jews.*

23 *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*

24 *God is a spirit : and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

25 *The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ : when he is come, he will tell us all things.*

26 *Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.*

IT was about the beginning of April when our Lord quitted Jerusalem at the close of the Passover, and He stayed at Bethabara a full month. So it appears from the circumstance that when He reached Jacob's Well, the harvest was ready for the sickle (ver. 35). On the low, sultry plains of Jericho and Gennesaret the grain ripened early, insomuch that when the Passover fell in April, the unleavened bread was

baked with the new flour ; but on the cool uplands harvest-time was the close of May. He had contemplated only a brief repose at Bethabara, but He was detained there by the multitude which presently gathered round Him ; and He might have protracted still longer His ministry among them but for two occasions which hastened His departure. One was that His activities attracted the attention of the Pharisees, and He had no liking for vexatious controversy ; and the other, which the Evangelist merely suggests since it was before his readers on the pages of his predecessors (cf. Mt. iv. 12, xiv. 3-5 ; Mk. vi. 17-20 ; Lk. iii. 19, 20), was that tidings had reached Him of the Baptist's arrest at Ænon by Herod Antipas. See how this the main reason is here doubly suggested. It is anticipated by the Evangelist's explanation a little ago (cf. iii. 23) that " John had not yet been cast into prison " ; and now it is distinctly implied by his significant remark that " He must needs pass through Samaria." Where lay the necessity ? The direct route from Bethabara to Galilee led through Peræa ; and the route through Samaria was not merely circuitous but dangerous, since it ran through a hostile territory (cf. exposition of Lk. ix. 52, 53). Yet our Lord chose the latter, and the reason was that travelling by it He would pass near Ænon and not only ascertain the particulars of His friend's arrest but perhaps meet with some of his scattered followers. He would set out with the five in the cool of the morning, and travelling hastily by " the sixth hour "—that is, according to our Evangelist's reckoning, not noon but 6 p.m. (cf. i. 39)—they had done some thirty miles and entered the upland plain of *Mukhna* or " Cornfields," bounded on the south by Mount Gerizim and on the north by Mount Ebal and extending westward to the ancient city of Sychem (Shechem). It was not only a fertile region but rich in historic memorials. There close to Sychem lay the parcel of ground which Joseph, the ancestor, as they claimed, of the Samaritans, had inherited from his father Jacob, and where his children had buried his bones when they brought them from Egypt (cf. Gen. xxxiii. 19, xlviii. 21, 22 ; Josh. xxiv. 32). And beside the highway, where it remains to this day, there was a deep well dug, it was believed, by the patriarch Jacob and then as now

called by his name. "It is dug," wrote the old traveller Henry Maundrell in the quaint record of his Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem at Easter, 1697 A.D., "in a firm Rock, and contains about three yards in diameter, and thirty-five in depth: five of which we found full of Water." It is within a mile of the town of Sychar (now *Askar*) where they had meant to lodge for the night; but Jesus, feebler than His stalwart companions, was spent with travel and on reaching the well He sank exhausted on the low parapet. He could go no farther, and they left Him resting there and "went away unto the city to buy meat."

There was no lack of water at Sychar, but distilling as it did from the calcareous soil of Mount Ebal beneath which the town nestled, it was harsh and distasteful; and it was nothing uncommon for the townsfolk to fetch home supplies of the water of Jacob's Well, so cool and sweet since it sprang out of the depth of the earth. Evening was the time when women drew water (cf. Gen. xxiv. 11); and as Jesus sat there, one approached with her pitcher. In Jewish eyes she was trebly an outcast, being a woman (cf. Introduction, p. xxii), a Samaritan woman, and, as her unbound hair proclaimed (see exposition of Lk. vii. 38), a woman of ill fame; and any other than our Lord would have shrunk aside from the pollution of her presence. But despite His weariness His heart warmed to her, and in His very weariness He found His opportunity. He watched her letting down her pitcher; and as she drew it up brimming and dripping, He eyed it thirstily. "Give Me to drink" said He.

It illumines the inimitable colloquy which ensues when we consider how it came to be written here with such exquisite felicity and a simplicity which attests its truth. It is not the Evangelist's own story; for he was not present. With the other four he had "gone away unto the city to buy meat." Jesus and the woman were alone at the well, and it was she who told what passed between them. St. John had the story from her lips, and one can hardly read it without recognising it as hers. It is told from her point of view, displaying her surprise, her womanly kindness, her shame ill disguised by a poor affectation of ribaldry, her evasions, and her final confession of her spiritual yearning.

"Give Me to drink" said Jesus as she was putting her pitcher on her head to carry it home; and like Rebekah of old (Gen. xxiv. 18) "she hasted, and let down her pitcher on her hand," and held it to His lips. It was the natural instinct of a kindly heart, but as He drank she could not refrain from a gibe. Plainly from His dress and speech He was a Jew, and, explains the Evangelist, "Jews have no dealings with Samaritans." "How is it," she asked, "that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, being a woman, a Samaritan woman?" Here He had His opportunity. "If," He answered, "thou hadst known the gift of God and who it is that saith to thee 'Give Me to drink,' thou wouldst have asked Him, and He would have given thee living water." Observe the significance of the speech. Like the reference to the wind in the conference with Nicodemus (cf. iii. 8), it is an attempt to raise her thoughts from the earthly to the heavenly. The word here rendered "gift" is always used in the New Testament in a religious sense, generally of the Holy Spirit (cf. Ac. ii. 38) or the grace of God in Christ (cf. Rom. v. 15). In the arid East water was a precious and indeed a holy thing, a manifest bounty of Heaven. "It is Zeus," said the Greek poet, "who rains water." Hence it was a fitting emblem of a thing more precious still—the bounty of heavenly grace. "If thou hadst known the bounty of God and who it is that saith to thee 'Give Me to drink,' thou wouldst have asked Him, and He would have given thee living water." Human language is always inadequate to express divine ideas, and here there is an ambiguity. In common speech "living water" signified running water, always fresh, the water of a spring or a stream as distinguished from the standing water of a cistern (cf. Jer. ii. 13); and so the woman understood the phrase. For a moment she was puzzled; and here our Version misses the point of the original. "Sir," said she, "neither hast thou anything to draw with, and the shaft (not here "the well") is deep" . . . She had meant to continue: "nor is there another well more accessible at hand"; but she broke off and took to ridicule: "Whence (omit "then") hast thou the 'living water'? Art thou greater than our father Jacob who gave us the shaft?"—not "the well": Jacob did not give

the "well" or "spring" but merely dug the shaft, giving access to the spring. Unheeding her ribaldry He gently explained what He meant by "living water"—not "this water" from the well, which quenched the thirst of the lips for a time, but the heavenly water which quenches the thirst of the soul for ever, since its fountain is within—"a well of water springing up to life eternal," like the well in Scott's Tower of Tillietudlem which never went dry, making the fortress, when garrisoned and victualled, impregnable to siege. It was lost upon the woman. "Sir," she sneered, "give me this water, that I thirst not, neither"—pointing to the broad expanse of cornfields—"come all the way here to draw"—the same phrase in the original that the shepherds used (cf. Lk. ii. 15) when they cried: "Let us go now," "let us pass over unto Bethlehem," over the wide moorland.

Finding gentleness thus unavailing, He now tries severity and silences her mocking lips by casting her sin in her face: "Go, call thy husband." Here a difficulty emerges—a twofold difficulty. (1) It seems extraordinary that a woman should have been five times married and now be leading a life of shame. The early Fathers, following their accustomed method of allegorical interpretation, took the five husbands figuratively: as, for example, the five Books of Moses which alone of the Old Testament Scriptures were accepted by the Samaritans; or the five senses which had exercised their unhallowed dominion over the woman. And some moderns, eager to make the Gospel out an unhistorical romance, are not ashamed to emulate this antique puerility by recognising in the five bygone husbands the five gods of the heathen ancestry of the Samaritan people—the gods of Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim (cf. 2 Ki. xvii. 24), and in the paramour the God of Israel whom the mongrel race now heretically worshipped. In truth there is here no allegory but an example of the working of the marriage-law which in our Lord's day obtained in the Holy Land and which bore so cruelly on womankind, permitting a husband to "put away his wife for any cause" and eventually, however often she might remarry, reducing her to earn a livelihood by her shame (see exposition of Mt. v. 31, 32). Such had been the

experience of this woman—a sinner but “more sinn’d against than sinning.” No wonder she engaged our Lord’s compassion.

But (2) how did He know her story, meeting her as a stranger? It is a false and indeed heretical theology which imputes it to divine omniscience; for that were a denial of His true humanity and thus of the reality of the Incarnation, and moreover an ignoring of the constant testimony of the Evangelists that in the days of His flesh He shared all our sinless limitations, including our human nescience. Was He, for example, omniscient when, that He might go thither and awake His friend Lazarus out of sleep, He asked (Jo. xi. 34) “Where have ye laid him?” How then was He thus acquainted with this woman’s past? It was indeed very evident what manner of woman she was, and a less perceiving eye than His (cf. ii. 25) would have read her condition; but how did He know the particulars thereof? Remember that it is she who is telling the story here. When He looked at her with His calm scrutiny, so gentle yet so penetrating, it mastered her, and like every one who ever met Him face to face she bowed before Him. False pretences were unavailing in His presence. Her sin rose up before her; and just as by and by she cried to her neighbours “Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did” (ver. 29), so here, in relating what passed, though all He actually said was “Thou hast well said ‘I have no husband.’ Herein thou hast spoken true,” she puts on His lips not simply what He said but what it meant for her.

Thus He brought her sin home to her; but still she resisted and, after a sinner’s wont, sought to evade the issue and put off decision. First she essayed to raise the old controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans. “Sir,” said she, “I perceive that thou art a prophet. Tell me, which is the right Temple—yours at Jerusalem or”—pointing southward to Mount Gerizim—“ours at this mountain?” But He would not be thus turned aside. He told her that the old controversy was dead inasmuch as a new era was dawning. “An hour is coming when neither at this mountain nor at Jerusalem shall ye worship” not “God” but “the Father.” Here lay the difference. Jews and Samaritans alike had viewed God as

a mere national deity and not as the universal Father ; and now that the larger faith was revealed, the racial and local limitation had disappeared. Judaism was indeed a purer religion than Samaritanism, being a preparation for the nobler revelation. "Ye worship what ye know not ; we worship what we know, because salvation is of the Jews." Yet even so Judaism was not the "true" religion. Observe what "truth" signifies here and constantly in the New Testament. Its proper antithesis is not falsehood but symbol, type, shadow (cf. Heb. viii. 2, 5, x. 1) ; and when our Lord speaks of "the true worship," He does not mean that all earlier worship had been "false." For every religion "that man did ever find" has sprung from the soul's inborn need ; and the difference between Christianity and other religions is not that they are false and it alone is true, but that they are mere yearnings and gropings after God, and it is their realisation. "An hour is coming, it now is, when the real worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and reality ; for the Father seeketh such for His worshippers. God is spirit, and His worshippers must worship in spirit and reality."

Thus our Lord appealed to that poor sinner to have done with the futile past and respond in her sore need to the Heavenly Father's all-encompassing love and grace ; and though her heart was touched, she still held back, attempting another evasion. It was a pretext for putting off decision. The Samaritans no less than the Jews cherished the hope of the Coming Saviour ; and Sychar like the rest of that neighbourhood was stirred in those days by the message which the Baptist had been proclaiming at Ænon only some fifteen miles away. "I know," said she, "that Messiah"—"which," observes the Evangelist, explaining the Hebrew name to his Greek readers, "is called Christ"—"is coming. When He comes, He will tell us all about it." "I am He," said Jesus—"I who am talking to thee."

2. A LESSON FOR THE DISCIPLES

iv. 27-38

27 *And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman : yet no man said, What seekest thou ? or, Why talkest thou with her ?*

28 *The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,*

29 *Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did : is not this the Christ ?*

30 *Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.*

31 *In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.*

32 *But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.*

33 *Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat ?*

34 *Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*

35 *Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest ? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields ; for they are white already to harvest.*

36 *And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal : that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.*

37 *And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.*

38 *I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour : other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.*

HERE the Evangelist takes up the story. Whatever the response of the woman's heart, it died on her lips ; for just then he and his four companions appeared on the scene, and their looks put her to silence. Jews as they were with all the Jewish contempt for womankind (cf. Introduction, p. xxii), "they marvelled that He was talking with " not " the " but " a woman." Reverence for the Master restrained them, and they neither demanded of her what she was seeking nor remonstrated with Him for talking with her ; but their faces expressed their unspoken resentment, and she fled away to the town, leaving her pitcher behind her, and published the tidings : " Come, see a man who told me all that ever I did ! Can it be that this is the Christ ? "

They had left Him faint and weary, but they found Him exceedingly refreshed. Truly " as cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news " ; and He had received good cheer at Jacob's Well. " Rabbi, eat," said they, producing the provision which they had procured ; but He would have none of it. And when they whispered to each other : " Hath some one "—meaning the woman, a Samaritan whose food was unclean in Jewish eyes, even as swine's flesh—" brought Him food ? " He answered that the doing of His Father's will was meat to Him.

And then He told them what it was that had so gladdened Him. Already during the three months or so which had elapsed since He had won them, and especially during their sojourn at Bethabara, He had been acquainting them with their mission as His disciples and Apostles ; and in view of the discouragement which they had experienced through the unspirituality of the multitude and the suspicion of the rulers, they had been realising how difficult was their task. And they had been cheering themselves with the maxim that " all noble things are difficult." They had been quoting that husbandman's proverb : " Yet four months, and the harvest cometh." Like the husbandman they must be content to sow in tears and wait for the precious fruit, having long patience (cf. Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6 ; Ja. v. 7). And here He reproves their gloomy forebodings. " Lift up your eyes," He cries, " and behold ! " And what did they behold ? Not merely the wide cornfields white unto harvest, waiting the sickle,

but a greater spectacle still—an eager multitude approaching from the town (cf. ver. 30), the first-fruits of a rich and plenteous spiritual harvest. “Already (so the sentence should be construed) the reaper is receiving his wage and gathering fruit unto life eternal.” In truth they were not sowers; they were rather reapers. For the sowing had been done by others—the prophets and faithful men who from generation to generation had been preparing for the Saviour’s advent. “Herein is the saying true, One soweth and another reapeth.”

3. MINISTRY AT SYCHAR

iv. 39-42

39 *And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.*

40 *So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them : and he abode there two days.*

41 *And many more believed because of his own word ;*

42 *And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying : for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

SEE how it began. The woman's report of the wonderful stranger whom she had encountered at the Well, excited curiosity in the town ; and, though most treated it lightly, many hastened thither. And when they saw and heard Him, their hearts too were won, and they hospitably besought Him and His fellow-travellers, Jews though they were, to come to their town and "tarry" or rather "abide with them" for the night (cf. i. 38). He had intended probably to push on that evening to Ænon, but it would be late ere He had done discoursing to His audience at the Well, and He acceded to their importunity. He would learn at Sychar what had befallen the Baptist, and so graciously was He entreated that instead of resuming His journey next morning He abode there for two days, and won many more. These had made light of the woman's report, and had remained at home when their more impressionable neighbours trooped out to the Well ; but where her "saying" or rather, as they contemptuously styled it, her "talk" had been disregarded, His "word" prevailed. Observe, it is not written that He wrought any miracles at Sychar. He simply preached. It was His "word" and not, as at Jerusalem (cf. ii. 23), His "signs" that persuaded these Samaritans that He was indeed the Messiah and "the Saviour," not merely of Israel, but, as His preaching to them proved, "of the world."

4. HEALING OF A NOBLEMAN'S CHILD AT CANA

iv. 43-54

43 *Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.*

44 *For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.*

45 *Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast : for they also went unto the feast.*

46 *So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain *nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.*

47 *When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son : for he was at the point of death.*

48 *Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.*

49 *The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.*

50 *Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way ; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.*

51 *And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth.*

52 *Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.*

53 *So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth : and himself believed, and his whole house.*

54 *This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judæa into Galilee.*

* Or, courtier, or, ruler.

“**A**FTER the two days” He left Sychar and set out for Galilee. “*For*,” says the Evangelist, “Jesus Himself testified that ‘a prophet hath no honour in his own country’ (cf. Mt. xiii. 57; Mk. vi. 4; Lk. iv. 24).” The reasoning here seems inconsequential. Galilee was His own country; and was not the fact that a prophet hath no honour in his own country rather a reason against His going thither? One ancient explanation is that His own country here signifies not Galilee but Judæa where He had been born at Bethlehem; and being dishonoured there He now betakes Himself to Galilee. But His birth at Bethlehem was generally forgotten, and since He had spent His whole life at Nazareth, He was reckoned a Galilean. It may be that the sentence is elliptic according to a common Greek idiom. Thus it is written in St. Mark’s story of the Resurrection (xvi. 4) that when the women came to the sepulchre, “they saw that the stone was rolled back: *for* it was very great”; where the implicit reasoning is: “(which was surprising); for it was very great.” And so here: “He went into Galilee (—a strange, a courageous thing to do); for Jesus Himself testified, etc.” Perhaps, however, there is no ellipse and the Evangelist is here stating not the reason of our Lord’s going into Galilee but rather the reason of His two days’ stay at Sychar. When the Samaritans welcomed His message, He interrupted His journey and abode with them; and the reason why He abode with them so long and was so loath to leave them was that He anticipated a very different reception in Galilee.

And on His crossing the frontier some fifteen miles north of Sychar His forebodings were realised. “The Galileans received” or rather “welcomed Him,” but what was it that moved them? It was the fame of His doings at Jerusalem, the signs which He had wrought there during the Passover season (cf. ii. 23) and which those of them who had attended the Feast had witnessed and had reported on their return home. Hence their enthusiasm. They crowded round Him not, like the people of Sychar, to hear His word but in the hope of “seeing signs and wonders” (cf. ver. 48). Thus beset He would make slow progress, and it would take Him two full days to reach the village of Cana some forty miles distant from Sychar. Capernaum was His

destination, but Cana was the scene of His first miracle and it was natural that He should halt there to revisit the friends whose home He had honoured at the wedding-feast.

He arrived toward seven o'clock in the evening (cf. ver. 52 and see exposition of i. 39); and a distinguished personage encountered Him. He belonged to Capernaum, and the Evangelist styles him "a nobleman" or rather "a king's officer"; and since this was in those days the designation of an administrator of the royal revenues, it is likely that he served in that capacity under the Tetrarch Herod Antipas, and it may be that he was none other than that Chuzas, Herod's steward, whose wife Joanna was one of the devoted women who afterwards ministered unto our Lord of their substance (cf. Lk. viii. 3, where see exposition). And what was his present errand? Trouble had visited his home. His son was dying. Observe here two tender touches which are obliterated in our Version. One is that his son was a mere infant, a babe, since "child" (ver. 49) is the word which St. Mark uses (x. 13) of the "young" or "little children" who were brought to Jesus that He might bless them, and whom St. Luke calls (xviii. 15) "infants" or "babes." And further he was the nobleman's only child, since "whose son" (ver. 46) is literally "the son (not 'a son') of whom." Rumour travels fast, and the nobleman had heard of the Lord's progress through Galilee; and aware of His miracles in Jerusalem he had hastened to meet Him in the hope of bringing Him down to Capernaum in time to save his child's life.

He found Him at Cana and presented his petition. It jarred upon our Lord's ears, chiming, as it seemed, with the spirit which had so vexed Him at Jerusalem and which He had encountered in His progress through Galilee. Was this another representative of a carnal generation, alive to earthly concerns but heedless of the heavenly grace which He had come to bestow? "Except," He remonstrated, "ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe!" The man offered neither defence nor excuse. Too troubled for argument or discussion, he cried in the anguish of his heart: "Sir, come down ere my child die!" Perhaps he lacked a sense of his deeper need, but he had a human sorrow and yearned for help. And this sufficed.

His sorrow moved the Lord's compassion, and He responded beyond the suppliant's hope. He did not go down to Capernaum; but "He sent forth His word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions" (Ps. cvii. 20). "Go thy way" said He; "thy son liveth." It is an example of the confidence which our Lord inspired in all who ever had to do with Him, that the man accepted His assurance. Late though it was he hastened homeward to ascertain the issue; and half-way down to Capernaum he met "his slaves" coming in quest of him. They greeted him with the joyful tidings "Thy son liveth!" He asked when he "began to amend" or, as the phrase in the original rather signifies, "had taken the turn." "Yesterday at seven o'clock," they answered, "the fever left him." Thus his faith was confirmed, and his whole household shared it when he told the story.

PERIOD OF CONTROVERSY

v, vi

AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA

V. I-15

1 *After this there was a feast of the Jews ; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*

2 *Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep *market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.*

3 *In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.*

4 *For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water : whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.*

5 *And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.*

6 *When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole ?*

7 *The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool : but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.*

8 *Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.*

9 *And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked : and on the same day was the sabbath.*

10 *The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day : it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.*

11 *He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.*

12 *Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk ?*

13 *And he that was healed wist not who it was : for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a †multitude being in that place.*

14 *Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto*

* Or, gate.

† Or, from the multitude that was.

him, Behold, thou art made whole : sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

15 *The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.*

HERE, in pursuance of its plan (cf. Introduction, p. xxix), the narrative takes a long forward leap, passing over in silence our Lord's eventful ministry in Galilee as already sufficiently recounted by the earlier Evangelists, and starting afresh with His next visit to Jerusalem. Observe how St. John indicates the break when he remarks (iv. 54) that the healing of the nobleman's son at Cana was " the second sign that Jesus did " not in the course of His ministry, since He had done others at Jerusalem during the Passover-season (cf. ii. 23), but " after coming out of Judæa into Galilee," plainly intimating that, as it was not His first miracle in Galilee, so neither was it His last. It was only the second, and it was followed by many more.

What was the feast that took Him back to Jerusalem? It is unnamed, and since both readings are strongly supported, it is a question whether St. John wrote " a feast " or " the feast of the Jews." In either case it is hardly doubtful that he meant the Passover. So it was assumed in the earliest times as by St. Irenæus. And the very indefiniteness of the reference is decisive. The Passover, which claimed the attendance of every true Israelite (cf. Lk. ii. 41), was " the Feast " *par excellence*; and had this been any other, the Evangelist must have expressly designated it (cf. vii. 2, x. 22). The feasts of Passover are the landmarks of our Lord's public ministry. It began with His appearance at the Passover of the year 26; and since He settled at Capernaum about the beginning of June, the blank in St. John's narrative comprehends His ensuing activities in Galilee (see Mk. i. 14-iii. 6 with the parallel passages of Mt. and Lk.) until He went up to Jerusalem for the Passover of 27 A.D., which fell that year on April 9.

Much had happened during the interval. At the outset, as St. John has shown, our Lord's claims had impressed the rulers, and though suspicious and increasingly resentful, they had

exhibited no open hostility. But his ministry at Capernaum proved Him in their judgment a dangerous heretic, especially on two accounts: His habitual violation of their law of Sabbath-observance and His claim to deity (cf. Mt. xii. 1-14; Mk. ii. 23-iii. 6; Lk. vi. 1-11). These were both blasphemies, and blasphemy was a capital offence; and they had decreed His death and were restrained only by apprehension of a popular insurrection should they molest One so revered by the multitude.

Such was the situation now when He went up to the Feast. He was the hero of the populace, but the rulers eyed Him with undisguised enmity, "willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike"; and they found their opportunity when He wrought this miracle on the Sabbath Day. The Holy Land abounded in mineral springs, some, as is usual in a volcanic region, being hot springs, like those at Emmaus beside the Lake of Galilee whither in our Lord's day invalids resorted for bathing in the waters. Jerusalem had its springs, and the most celebrated was this pool or rather bath situated not "by the sheep market" but "by the Sheep Gate" (cf. Neh. iii. 1, 32, xii. 39). The position of the Sheep Gate is unknown, nor has the bath been certainly identified among the ruins of the ancient city. Its very name is uncertain, since the manuscripts vary between *Bethzatha*, *Bethesda*, and *Bethsaida*. The last may be dismissed as merely a copyist's substitution of a familiar name for an unfamiliar; and probably the bath was known by both the other names. Bethzatha was the name of the district to the north of the Temple, and the bath was called "the Bath of Bethzatha" since it was situated there, and was also known, by reason of its healing virtue, by the beautiful name of Bethesda, signifying "House of Mercy." It was much frequented, and for the convenience of sufferers desirous of bathing in its medicinal waters it was enclosed from public observation and surrounded with five porches, where they enjoyed decent privacy. St. Jerome, who, residing in a hermitage at Bethlehem some five miles south of the city, was familiar with the Bath, mentions that its water had a reddish tinge, popularly explained in his day by the fancy that of old, prior to the destruction of the Temple by the Romans, the priests had been accustomed to wash in it the slaughtered

victims ere laying them on the altar. In fact, however, it was due to the ferruginous quality of the strata whence the water was derived. It was furthermore a peculiarity of the Bath that it was subject to periodic agitation in consequence of volcanic movements which sent the deep spring boiling and bubbling to the surface. Most naturally, and probably with good reason, it was believed that on these occasions the medicinal efficacy of the water was especially potent.

It is no wonder that legends of heavenly patronage and interposition were woven by popular credulity round that healthful spring as round many another in other lands and other times, like our own

Saint Fillan's blessed well,
Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel,
And the crazed brain restore.

And one of these legends is preserved by a later embellishment of the sacred text (cf. ver. 4, absent from our earliest and best manuscripts), showing how the folk of Jerusalem regarded the House of Mercy and how they accounted for the beneficence of its waters. The periodic ebullition was indeed a natural phenomenon, but it was a mystery to uninstructed minds; and they attributed it to a heavenly visitation. In the moving of the water their fancy beheld the touch of an angel, the silent succour of a ministering spirit who, in pity for the throng of sufferers, ever and anon hovered unseen over the pool and quickened it to vitalising energy. The movement was momentary, soon subsiding, but while it lasted it was surely efficacious, not indeed for all but for the first to grasp the opportunity and plunge into the troubled water—a limitation which testifies pathetically to the frequency of disappointed hope.

It is in no wise strange that this legend should have made its way into the sacred text. The like has happened in not a few other passages of Scripture. After the fashion of early days the popular fancy was noted by a careful reader on the margin of his copy of the Gospel, and afterwards a scribe, mistaking it for an accidental omission, would insert it in what he deemed its proper position in the body of the narrative.

It was a blunder, but it was a fortunate blunder ; for, while plainly recognising the verse as a later interpolation, who would be so dull as to resent its presence? It affords us a moving glimpse of that old world and the men and women who inhabited it, revealing to us in their lives sorrows and sufferings and hopes very like our own. And, moreover, crude as the fancy seems to our modern minds, it eloquently proclaims to understanding ears a truth which we are too apt to forget. It is this—that there is heavenly grace in every natural operation, and apart from miracle there is no healing without God. So, with true and memorable wisdom, confessed Ambroise Paré, “the father of modern surgery,” in the sixteenth century, when, being complimented on his handling of a desperate case, “I only dressed the wound,” said he: “it was God who healed it.”

Visiting Bethesda that Sabbath Day our Lord saw that poor creature—an old man paralysed for thirty-eight years, lying not on a “bed” but on a “litter” or “pallet,” a mere mat which he spread beneath him on the hard pavement when he struggled daily to the bath in the hope of getting into the water at the efficacious moment. His worst misery was that his infirmity was the consequence of his own ill-doing, his youthful sensuality (cf. ver. 14) ; and it appealed to the Friend of Sinners. He healed him on the spot, and immediately slipped away to escape the embarrassing applause of the crowd which quickly gathered. The man took up his pallet and, ignorant who his Benefactor was, hastened to the Temple, doubtless that he might offer thanks to God. There he encountered some of the rulers, evidently Pharisees, who, regardless as they were of the misery about them, did not recognise him and sternly challenged him for carrying a burden on the Sabbath. His defence was that his healer had bidden him take up his pallet and walk. It was news to them that he had been healed, but instead of placating them it set them on a fresh track. They guessed what had happened, since there was only one Divine Healer in the city ; and they basely tried to entrap the witless creature into betraying his Benefactor and furnishing them with a pretext for taking action against Him.

“ Who,” they demanded, “ is the fellow that ”—not “ made thee whole ” but—“ said unto thee, Take up thy pallet and walk ? ” But he could not tell them and they let him pass.

Meanwhile our Lord had kept an eye upon the man, since when He had healed him, His work was merely begun. He had followed him to the Temple, and there He “ findeth him.” He found him because He was looking for him (cf. i. 41) ; and He spoke to him of his poor wasted soul, warning him to have done with the sin which had cost him so dear. In the simplicity of his heart he sought the rulers and informed them who his Benefactor was, thinking to honour Him in their eyes and never dreaming of their malign purpose. Thus he betrayed Him.

And yet it never was in his soul
To play so ill a part :
But evil is wrought by want of thought,
As well as by want of heart !

DISPUTATION WITH THE RULERS

v. 16-47

16 *And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.*

17 *But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*

18 *Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.*

19 *Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do : for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.*

20 *For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth : and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.*

21 *For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them ; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.*

22 *For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son :*

23 *That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.*

24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life.*

25 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God : and they that hear shall live.*

26 *For as the Father hath life in himself ; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself ;*

27 *And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.*

28 *Marvel not at this : for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,*

29 *And shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

30 *I can of mine own self do nothing : as I hear, I judge : and my judgment is just ; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*

31 *If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.*

32 *There is another that beareth witness of me ; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.*

33 *Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.*

34 *But I receive not testimony from man : but these things I say, that ye might be saved.*

35 *He was a burning and a shining light : and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.*

36 *But I have greater witness than that of John : for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.*

37 *And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.*

38 *And ye have not his word abiding in you : for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.*

39 *Search the scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life : and they are they which testify of me.*

40 *And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*

41 *I receive not honour from men.*

42 *But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.*

43 *I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not : if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.*

44 *How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only ?*

45 *Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father : there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.*

46 *For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me : for he wrote of me.*

47 *But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words ?*

THE rulers had obtained their desired opportunity. After His talk with the man whom He had healed He was taking His way across the Temple-court, and they—not “persecuted”—but (as the word signifies, for example, in Rom. ix. 30, 31, xiv. 19 ; 1 Cor. xiv. 1 ; Phil. iii. 12 ; Heb. xii. 14) “pursued,” “followed after Him.” On overtaking Him they challenged Him in presence of the crowd for His violation of the Sabbath, not merely in this particular instance but “because,” as they had learned by the reports which had reached them from Galilee, “He was in the habit of doing these things on the Sabbath.” He answered by enunciating a large truth which they ignored in their Sabbatarian theologising : “My Father hath been working down to the present moment.” God’s working, He meant, did not, as the Rabbis supposed, cease when He had created the world. It never ceases. For, says Darwin, “natural selection is daily and hourly scrutinising, throughout the world, the slightest variations ; rejecting those that are bad, preserving and adding up all that are good ; silently and insensibly working, *whenever and wherever opportunity offers*, at the improvement of each organic being in relation to its organic and inorganic conditions of life.” His providence is a ceaseless beneficence, which

Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glowes in the stars, and blossoms in the trees ;
Lives thro’ all life, extends thro’ all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.

It is the Creator’s sustaining hand that holds the Universe in being, and should He for a moment cease from working, the world would fall in ruins. For Him there is no Day of Rest. “My Father,” says our Lord, “hath been working down to the present moment ; and,” He adds, “I am working.”

That was His justification of His healing on the Sabbath Day; but so far from satisfying them it furnished them with another and graver charge. For what was it but a reaffirmation of His claim to deity? "Not only was He in the habit of breaking the Sabbath but He called God His Father, making Himself equal to God." With this charge He now deals and fearlessly vindicates His claim.

Observe His argument. First (vers. 19, 20) He clears away a misapprehension. His claim to deity was no denial of His true humanity. For He was not merely the Eternal Son of God; He was the Eternal Son Incarnate, sharing the common limitations and infirmities of the children of men. And in this His state of humiliation He could "of Himself" do nothing. He was merely God's instrument and the channel of His grace. His works were not His own. They were wrought by God through Him. His will was one with God's, and therefore whatever He would He did inasmuch as His will had God's power behind it. "The Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things which He Himself doeth."

"And," He continues, "greater works than these will He show Him, that ye may marvel." And of these greater works—greater than the healing of the paralytic—He mentions two: Resurrection and Judgment (vers. 21-30). It was not "of Himself" that He had healed the paralytic. It was a manifestation of the quickening power of God; and by that same power He would work the greater miracle of raising the dead and quickening them. And since His work was the work of God, men's attitude toward Him was their attitude toward God; and thereby they were judged. To believe in Him was to believe in God; and this was a truly gracious dispensation, bringing God near to men and clothing His appeal in a tender, sympathetic, human guise. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath given all judgment unto the Son. And He gave Him authority to do judgment because He is the Son of Man." Here lies the grace of the Incarnation. "The Saviour of the world," says Jeremy Taylor, "became human, alluring, full of invitation and the sweetness of love, exemplary, humble, and medicinal."

So, the All-Great were the All-Loving too—
 So, through the thunder comes a human voice
 Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here!
 Face, My hands fashioned, see it in Myself!
 Thou hast no power nor mayest conceive of Mine,
 But love I gave thee, with Myself to love,
 And thou must love Me who have died for thee!"

Here lies the grace of the Incarnation ; and here lies also the guilt of unbelief.

It was indeed a tremendous claim, and it was proverbial that a man's testimony in his own cause is insufficient. But our Lord's claim was supported by other testimony than His own—the testimony of God ; and the evidence hereof was three-fold : (1) The testimony of John the Baptist (vers. 33–35). The rulers had appealed to him, and he had proclaimed Jesus the Messiah. Our Lord indeed needed no human testimony, and He quoted John's testimony merely in the hope of persuading them and saving them from their unbelief. And it should weigh with them ; for they had once recognised him—"the lamp," as they had called him, "that burneth and shineth"—as a mighty prophet, and had for a season been disposed to rejoice in his light. Could they ignore his testimony now? (2) The testimony of our Lord's own works (vers. 36–38). At the very outset of His ministry, when He had as yet wrought but few miracles, their deputy Nicodemus had confessed on their behalf (cf. iii. 2) that He was certainly "a teacher come from God," since "no one could do the signs which He was doing unless God were with him." They had then recognised His miracles as attestations of His divine commission as a revealer of the Unseen Father ; and that acknowledgment was a condemnation of their present unbelief. And (3) the testimony of the Scriptures (vers. 39–47). "Search the Scriptures" is indeed a salutary admonition, yet it is surprising that our Lord should have addressed it to those rulers. For they were Pharisees, and not merely Pharisees but Scribes, and the searching of the Scriptures was their daily business which they performed with excessive diligence. Their reverence for the sacred volume amounted to idolatry. They held that God had written

the Law with His own finger, and had handed it to Moses out of Heaven ; and the only question was whether He had delivered it all at once or book by book. They even went the length of maintaining that He was Himself the Chief Scribe, employing Himself daily in its study and exposition. They counted the words and letters, and discovered in each a mystic significance. Moreover, they were stout controversialists, and they diligently searched the Scriptures for "proof-texts" in confutation of their opponents. It is thus not a little surprising that our Lord should have deemed it needful to bid them "search the Scriptures." In truth He does no such thing. For His words here are not a command, "Search the Scriptures," but an admonition against searching them to ill purpose. "Ye search the Scriptures," He says ; and why did they search them ? A little ago He had spoken of God's gift of "eternal life" which He had brought (ver. 24) ; and now He shows them how they were missing that precious boon. The hope of immortality was the main question at issue between the rival parties of the Pharisees and the Sadducees (cf. Ac. xxiii. 6-9). The latter denied it ; and the Scribes "searched the Scriptures, because they fancied that in them they had 'eternal life,' " eager to win the glory of a controversial triumph. And all the while they were blind to the Scriptures' testimony to Him, the Giver of Eternal Life. "Those Scriptures it is that testify concerning Me ; and ye will not come unto Me that ye may have Life." Here lay at once their heavy condemnation and their tragic loss. The grand purpose, the very *raison d'être* of the Scriptures was to testify of the Coming Saviour ; and so blinded were they by their futile disputations that when He came, they did not recognise Him. They had constructed an impossible ideal of the Messiah, and they rejected Him because He did not realise it. They were searching the Scriptures for proofs of Eternal Life ; and they would not come unto Him of whom the Scriptures testified and in whom they would have found the precious thing whereof they were vainly wrangling.

THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

vi. 1-14

1 *After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.*

2 *And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.*

3 *And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.*

4 *And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.*

5 *When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat ?*

6 *And this he said to prove him : for he himself knew what he would do.*

7 *Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.*

8 *One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,*

9 *There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes : but what are they among so many ?*

10 *And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.*

11 *And Jesus took the loaves ; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down ; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.*

12 *When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.*

13 *Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.*

14 *Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.*

CF. Mt. xiv. 13-21; Mk. vi. 30-44; Lk. ix. 10-17, where see exposition. Here occurs another break in the narrative. At the close of the Passover-week our Lord returned to Galilee and resumed His ministry there. His doings during this the second year of His ministry, being already sufficiently recorded by the earlier Evangelists (see Mk. iii. 7-vi. 29 with the parallel passages of Mt. and Lk.), St. John in accordance with his design passes over in silence (cf. Introduction, p. xxix); and now he takes up the story and tells, not of our Lord's next visit to Jerusalem, since on this occasion He did not go up to the Feast, but of a memorable incident which befell shortly before it (cf. ver. 4) and which explains the reason of His unusual absence. It had been an eventful year. The enthusiasm of the multitude, enkindled especially by His miracles which in their judgment proved Him the Messiah, had flamed ever higher; but it yielded Him no satisfaction, since, conceiving the Messiah as a national deliverer, they imputed to Him an alien rôle. And the growth of His popularity had been matched by the intensification of the rulers' enmity. In both He recognised premonitions of the inevitable end; and He had devoted Himself more and more to the task of training the Twelve and fitting them for the responsibility which would devolve upon them when He was gone. Sharing as they did the Jewish idea of the Messiah as the triumphant King of Israel, they were slow to apprehend the far different reality. Tidings of the Baptist's execution had just reached Him, admonishing Him of His own doom; and He recognised the expediency of withdrawing with the Twelve to a quiet retreat where He might disabuse their minds of their false expectation and discover to them His approaching Passion and its redemptive significance. Therefore it was that He crossed over to the eastern side of the Lake—the Lake of Galilee as it was then called, but better known to Gentile readers in after days as the lake of Tiberias, being so designated from the town of Tiberias, Herod Antipas' new

capital which was then nearing completion. It is an evidence of the importance of the occasion that this is the solitary instance where St. John repeats an incident of our Lord's Galilean ministry already recorded by his predecessors. And he not merely repeats it but adds several significant touches and elucidates several points which their narratives have left obscure.

It was springtime, since the Passover fell that year (28 A.D.) on March 29; and when they landed on the well-watered and fertile champaign adjacent to Bethsaida Julias (cf. Lk. ix. 10), the solitary break on the precipitous eastern shore, it was carpeted with soft, green grass (cf. Mk. vi. 39). Crossing it, they went up, not "into a mountain," but "into the mountain" or rather "the upland" behind the plain; and "there," says the Evangelist, "He sat with His disciples," meaning that after the Jewish manner (cf. Mt. v. 1; Lk. iv. 20) He began teaching them. Their converse was soon interrupted. The people had seen Him setting out from Bethsaida, the harbour of Capernaum (see exposition of i. 44), and they had followed Him on foot round the head of the Lake; and now "He lifteth up His eyes and beholdeth (cf. i. 14, 38) that a great multitude is coming unto Him." The "spectacle," as the Evangelist here terms it, of that eager throng trooping over the plain in quest of Him was indeed unwelcome, since He had come thither that He might be alone with the Twelve; but, ever quick to read providential purposes, He recognised in the seeming embarrassment a larger opportunity. The people were weary after their long pursuit, and there were among them not only women and children (cf. Mt. xiv. 21) but sick folk (Mt. xiv. 14; Lk. ix. 11); and He resolved to provide them with the refreshment which they sorely needed, making the miracle for them and His disciples a parable of His life-giving Passion.

He turned to Philip who, it would seem, looked after the provisioning of the Apostle-company. "Whence," He asked, "are we to buy loaves, that these may eat?" It seemed a ridiculous suggestion; and so it would have been had it been meant seriously and not rather, as the Evangelist explains, to engage attention. With characteristic dullness Philip took it seriously and elaborately demonstrated its impossibility. Why

should he have mentioned that precise sum—two hundred pence (*denarii*)? Was it that with his aptitude for that sort of business he made a swift calculation? He computed the crowd at five thousand men besides women and children—some six thousand in all. A *denarius* was then an ordinary day's wage (cf. Mt. xx. 2), and with an average household, then reckoned at five, half of it went for food, three meals a day. And so he made out that it would take two hundred *denarii* to provide a single meal for six thousand. The thing was impossible, he declared; and here his especial friend Andrew (see exposition of Mt. x. 2) interposed by way of corroboration. All the provisions available were five barley loaves—the rough bread which the poor ate—and two dried fishes (so the word in the original signifies), which a peasant lad of the neighbourhood was offering for sale. “But these,” said Andrew, “what are they among so many?”

So open an exposure of the poverty of their resources served our Lord's purpose by placing the reality of the ensuing miracle beyond dispute, and He bade the disciples summon the multitude to a meal. “Make”—not here “the men” but—“the people sit down” or rather “recline” like guests on their couches at table (the word in xiii. 12, 25; Lk. xxii. 14). “And the *men* reclined, in number about five thousand,” says the Evangelist, distinguishing them here from the women and children (cf. Mt. xiv. 21) whom he does not expressly mention. According to Jewish custom they would recline apart. It was a Jewish precept that “he who enjoys anything without thanksgiving is as he that robbeth God”; and in accordance herewith, though He had nothing before Him but the poor loaves and the two fishes, our Lord gave thanks after His manner in the Upper Room as all the Evangelists observe, thus indicating the *raison d'être* of the miracle as an anticipation of the sacramental communion of His body and blood. Then He distributed the scanty store, and it was multiplied in His hands even as, observe St. Augustine, a few grains are, by an unconsidered miracle, continually multiplied into the harvest which feeds the world.

Here St. John alone has recorded a significant word of our Lord. When all the multitude had been supplied, fragments

still remained, and He said to the Twelve: "Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost"; and they filled therewith the baskets which they carried after the fashion of Jewish travellers (see exposition of Mt. xiv. 20). In the Creator's working there is no waste. Parsimony is a law of Nature. It may indeed seem far otherwise when one thinks of her lavish profusion—the myriad blossoms that bloom unseen, "wasting their sweetness on the desert air" and "withering ere 'tis night"; yet not one of these is ever lost. In Nature's laboratory each withered leaf is recomposed and refashioned into the fresh mantle wherewith she arrays herself in the springtime. Parsimony is in truth a law of God. Once and only once is it written that He displayed prodigality—when, because man's need was extreme, He "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Rom. viii. 32). Thus it was fitting that the hand which multiplied the barley loaves should "gather up the fragments, that nothing might be lost"; but we see a further significance in the command when we consider how He afterwards reminded His faithless disciples of those baskets full of fragments (cf. Mt. xvi. 9; Mk. viii. 19). The superfluity was a further attestation of the reality of the miracle; and He meant thus to imprint it on their memories and the memories of the multitude, since He had much to tell them yet of its mystical significance.

The wonder of the miracle impressed the multitude; and though unaware of the truth which our Lord afterwards sought to bring home to them, they drew their own inference. "This," they cried, "is of a truth the Prophet that is coming into the world!" Observe their argument. The grand prototype of the Coming Saviour was Moses, who had been a prophet of the Lord to Israel and her deliverer from the land of bondage, and who had left her that promise (Dt. xviii. 15): "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me." It was construed of old as a prophecy of the Messiah. He would be a Prophet like unto Moses. All that the First Redeemer had been, would the Second Redeemer be. As Moses had fed the people in the wilderness with bread from heaven, so, it was said, would the

Messiah ; and what was our Lord's miracle but a fulfilment of that promise ? " Of a truth this is the Prophet that is coming into the world ! "

It is not a little remarkable that, while here synonymous with the Messiah, elsewhere in our Gospel " the Prophet " is sharply distinguished from Him (cf. i. 21, 25, vii. 40), signifying that ancient prophet, whether Elijah (cf. Mal. iv. 5, 6) or some other, who should reappear on the eve of the Messiah's advent and prepare the nation to receive Him. It seems an inconsistency, but in truth it is one of those numerous touches of verisimilitude which attest our Gospel's historicity. For that idea of the Messiah's herald was a later refinement of Rabbinical exegesis ; and familiar as it was to the Scribes and their disciples (cf. Mt. xvii. 10), it was strange to the simple folk of Galilee who, as our Evangelist here shows, adhered to the accustomed interpretation of Moses' promise and, like the primitive Christians (cf. Ac. iii. 22, vii. 37), identified " the Prophet " with the Messiah.

WALKING ON THE WATER

vi. 15-21

15 *When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.*

16 *And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea,*

17 *And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.*

18 *And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.*

19 *So, when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship : and they were afraid.*

20 *But he saith unto them, It is I ; be not afraid.*

21 *Then they willingly received him into the ship : and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.*

CF. Mt. xiv. 22-33 and Mk. vi. 45-52, where see exposition. The miracle, thus chiming with their Messianic expectation, confirmed the persuasion of the multitude that our Lord was indeed the Messiah, and it emboldened them to a wild enterprise. It had long been a puzzle to them why, being the Promised King of Israel, He should be so tardy in flinging off His lowly guise and taking His throne ; and they now resolved to precipitate the *dénouement* by forthwith acclaiming Him King and conveying Him in triumph to Jerusalem and presenting Him to the concourse of worshippers who would throng the Holy City at the approaching Feast of Passover. It was a recurrence of the temptation which had assailed Him in the wilderness at the outset of His ministry (cf. Mt. iv. 8-11 ; Lk. iv. 5-8) ; and when He detected their purpose, it dismayed Him, all the more that His disciples were evidently privy to it. He must frustrate it ; and what did He do ? First of all, in the

energetic phrase of the earlier Evangelists (Mt. xiv. 22 ; Mk. vi. 45) which is hardly intelligible without St. John's elucidation of it, He "straightway constrained" His disciples to re-embark and set sail for Capernaum ; and then amid the confusion of their departure He stole away under covert of the gathering night (cf. Mt. xiv. 15 ; Mk. vi. 35 ; Lk. ix. 12) to His upland retreat, and there, as He was wont in times of perplexity, gave Himself to prayer (cf. Mt. xiv. 23 ; Mk. vi. 46).

Rapt in heavenly communion He never observed the rising of a tempest from the west, until the day broke (cf. Mt. xiv. 25) and looking down upon the Lake He descried the little boat battling with wind and waves. The Lake was here forty furlongs broad ; and though they had been rowing hard all night, they were now only some two thirds of the way across, and mindful how He had once saved them in a like peril (cf. Mt. viii. 23-27), they were wishing that the Master was with them. Here He recognised an opportunity of following up the revelation of His Passion in the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand with a discovery of the mystery of His Resurrection (see exposition of Mt. xiv. 22-33). As on the Mount of Transfiguration, "the body of His humiliation" was changed into "the body of His glory," and He approached them over the windswept water. His greeting assured them that it was indeed Himself and no ghostly phantom ; and when they had welcomed Him on board, their trouble was ended. "Straightway the boat was at the land whither they were going." It was no miracle like the previous stilling of the storm when He rebuked the winds and the sea. Those tempests on the Lake subsided as suddenly as they arose ; and it may be that the wind now fell as they got under the lee of the western shore. Or was it simply that His presence inspired them with fresh resolution and they redoubled their efforts ? "A pleasant companion on the road," said an ancient proverb, "is as good as a carriage." Now that He was with them it seemed but a moment till they came to land. "When Christ is absent from His people," says Bunyan, "they go on but slowly, and with great difficulty ; but when He joineth Himself unto them, oh ! how fast they steer their course ! how soon are they at their journey's end !"

DISCOURSE ON THE BREAD OF LIFE

vi. 22-40

22 *The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone ;*

23 *(Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks :)*

24 *When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.*

25 *And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither ?*

26 *Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.*

27 **Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you : for him hath God the Father sealed.*

28 *Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God ?*

29 *Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*

30 *They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee ? what dost thou work ?*

31 *Our fathers did eat manna in the desert ; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.*

32 *Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven ; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.*

* Or, *Work not.*

33 *For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.*

34 *Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.*

35 *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life : he that cometh to me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*

36 *But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.*

37 *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

38 *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*

39 *And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*

40 *And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life : and I will raise him up at the last day.*

WHAT meanwhile of the multitude? They had watched the embarkation of the disciples and, observing that the Master was not with them, they knew that He had remained behind. Many of them would make their painful way home, as they had come, round the head of the Lake, but others stayed on in the hope of discovering Him and achieving their design of acclaiming Him King. So the Evangelist indicates when he speaks (ver. 22) of "the multitude which stood" or rather "had kept their station on the other side of the sea." Finding no trace of Him, they gave up hope of recovering Him. It happened opportunely for them that a fleet of boats belonging to Tiberias had come ashore during the night, probably fishing craft which had put in for shelter from the sudden tempest ; and by these they took their passage across the Lake and made inquiry after Him at Capernaum.

To their surprise they learned that He had got there before them and that He had gone to the synagogue and was teaching there (cf. ver. 59). Since they durst not then have made the

journey across the Lake, it was not the Sabbath Day but either Monday or Thursday, the two weekdays when the congregation assembled (see exposition of Mt. iv. 23-25) and they hastened to the synagogue. It was the Jewish fashion for disciples to put questions to their teacher (cf. Lk. ii. 46) ; and they greeted Him with the question which alone concerned them at the moment : " Rabbi, when gottest Thou here ? " Incongruous as it was with their surroundings, He welcomed it inasmuch as it opened the way to the end which He had in view—the reprobation of their wild notion of His Messianic Kingship and the enforcement of the high truths proclaimed by the wonders which they had witnessed.

He begins with a stern rebuke, an exposure and condemnation of the grossness of their Messianic ideal. Why had they sought Him so eagerly ? Not " because they had seen signs," recognising the spiritual significance of His miracle, but " because they had eaten of the loaves and been filled " and had seen therein the promise of a golden age of ease and plenty. Far different was the true blessedness of the Messianic Kingdom. " Work (the same word as in ver. 28) not for the meat that perisheth but for the meat that abideth unto life eternal, which the Son of Man (see exposition of i. 51 and Mt. viii. 20) will give you "—the Son of Man who in His lowliness was so diverse from their Messianic imagination of a victorious King of Israel, and who nevertheless bore the indubitable stamp of God's seal.

It was a manifest condemnation of their design of acclaiming Him King. Misguided as they were, they were honest and sincere, and had believed that therein they were doing a good work and advancing the Kingdom of Heaven. " What are we to do," they asked crestfallen, " that we may work the works of God ? " He answered that the work of God was not insistence on their own prejudice but faithful acceptance of the Messiah whom He had actually sent. Indeed they were so minded, and they humbly craved guidance and excused their error. What was the sign of His Messiahship ? They had seen it, as they imagined, in His miracle of the feeding of the multitude, taking this as the fulfilment of the feeding of their fathers with manna in the wilderness (cf. Ex. xvi. 12-15 ;

Ps. lxxviii. 24, 25). It had seemed to them a certain sign of His Messiahship ; and if they had erred, what was the true sign, that they might see it and believe Him ?

He explained that the manna was merely a type, and their error lay in their identifying that food for the body with the spiritual food which it symbolised and fancying that the Messiah would be merely a second Moses, doing no more than the first Moses had done. It was but earthly bread that Moses had given their fathers in the wilderness, and not the bread from Heaven. " Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses hath not given you the bread from Heaven. No, My Father giveth you the real bread from Heaven." And what is this heavenly bread ? Since the body is material, its nourishment is material ; but since the soul is spiritual, its nourishment is spiritual. And the only spiritual nourishment is communion of soul with soul. A teacher nourishes the souls of his disciples by communicating to them his thoughts ; but the thoughts of the wisest of human teachers are but poor and narrow, and the real bread from Heaven is a Divine Teacher. " The bread of God is One who cometh down from Heaven and giveth life to the world." " Lord," they prayed, " evermore give us this bread." " I," said He, " am the Bread of Life." And herewith He pleaded with them to open their eyes to His grace and recognise Him as the Saviour sent by God. Then their souls would live. They would never die. " For this is the will of My Father (so ver. 40 should be read), that every one that beholdeth the Son and believeth in Him should have eternal life ; and I will raise him up at the last day."

ENCOUNTER WITH THE RULERS

vi. 41-59

41 *The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.*

42 *And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?*

43 *Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.*

44 *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

45 *It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

46 *Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.*

47 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*

48 *I am that bread of life.*

49 *Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.*

50 *This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.*

51 *I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

52 *The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*

53 *Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*

54 *Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

55 *For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.*

56 *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*

57 *As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father : so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.*

58 *This is that bread which came down from heaven : not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead : he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.*

59 *These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.*

THUS far, by His reprobation of the popular idea of His Messianic Kingship, His designation of Himself as "the Bread of Life," and His reference to the Resurrection, our Lord has merely cleared the ground and opened the way for an exposition of the high truths shadowed forth by His miracles of the feeding of the multitude and walking on the water ; and hereto He was about to address Himself when He was interrupted. The rulers—"the Jews" as St. John styles them (see exposition of i. 19), meaning here not merely the local Pharisees but those deputies of the Sanhedrin commissioned to spy upon our Lord's doings in Galilee (cf. Mt. xv. 1 ; Mk. iii. 22)—were ranged about the preacher's platform (cf. Mt. xxiii. 6), and they had listened to Him with undisguised disapproval. And now they break into angry protest. Who was He that He should make such a claim ? "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know ? " Truly "a prophet hath no honour in his own country" (i. 44).

He took up their challenge, and first of all He met it with a plain home-truth. The reason of their rejection of His claim was that they were not, in prophetic phrase (cf. Is. liv. 13 ; Jer. xxxi. 33, 34), "taught of God." Ignorant of the Unseen Father, they failed to recognise His revealer. And then He reaffirmed and amplified His claim. "I am the Bread of Life—the Living Bread that cometh down from Heaven, that one may eat of it and not die." It was Jewish language and should have been intelligible to those Rabbis. "Thy words,"

had said the prophet of old (Jer. xv. 16), "were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of Mine heart." And did they not themselves speak of "eating the Messiah" in the sense of eagerly devouring His teaching? And so when, with a reference to the Manna which was with them a Messianic symbol, He called Himself "the Bread of Life," they should have understood Him as meaning that His teaching was the food of the soul. Thus far there was nothing strange, nothing shocking in His claim; but He did not leave it there. "The bread which I will give," He continued, "is——" what? Not merely "My teaching" but "My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" or rather, according to the true reading, simply "My flesh for the life of the world."

This startled them. "How can this fellow give us His flesh to eat?" And what did He mean? The phrase "My flesh for the life of the world" signified not merely His death but His sacrificial death—His broken body and His blood shed for many unto remission of sins (cf. Mt. xxvi. 28). The bread which a teacher gives is his teaching, but the bread which the Saviour gives is more than His teaching: it is His atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world; and even as, in Jewish phrase, a disciple must "eat" his teacher's words, so must a sinner "eat" the Saviour's sacrifice. Nay, more than "eat" it. For here, though our Version ignores the variation, our Lord changes the word. "Except ye *eat* the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that *feedeth* upon My flesh and drinketh My blood hath life eternal; and I will raise him up at the last day. He that *feedeth* upon My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in him. Even as the Living Father commissioned Me and I live because of the Father, so he that *feedeth* upon Me, he also shall live because of Me. He that *feedeth* upon this bread shall live eternally."

We taste Thee, O Thou Living Bread,
And long to feast upon Thee still;
We drink of Thee, the Fountain-head,
And thirst our souls from Thee to fill.

WIDESPREAD DISAFFECTION

vi. 60-71

60 *Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying ; who can hear it ?*

61 *When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you ?*

62 *What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before ?*

63 *It is the spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing : the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

64 *But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.*

65 *And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.*

66 *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

67 *Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away ?*

68 *Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go ? thou hast the words of eternal life.*

69 *And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.*

70 *Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil ?*

71 *He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon : for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.*

THE intervention of those malignant Scribes had unhappy consequences. Had they held their peace, our Lord after answering the question about His crossing of the Lake would have continued His discourse to the congregation and unfolded to them, with the simplicity befitting a popular audience, the parabolic significance of His miracles, apprising them of His imminent Passion and the glory which should follow it. But the intrusion of the Scribes diverted Him from His purpose and betrayed Him into a theological discussion which, though appropriate to them, was unintelligible to common folk and alienated many who had confessed themselves His disciples. "This is a hard saying," they whispered to each other; "who can hear it?"

He marked their discontent and essayed to retrieve the situation. "Does this make you stumble (cf. Mt. vi. 29)?" He kindly remonstrated; and then in the hope of lifting their minds from the barren logomachy to which the Scribes had reduced the argument He introduced the high theme of His Resurrection. "What then if ye behold the Son of Man ascending where He was formerly?" (cf. xx. 17). No responsive word or look encouraged Him to proceed; and He admonished them of the reason why they had missed the significance of His discourse on the Bread of Life, the eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood. It was that they had construed His words so literally, oblivious of their spiritual purport, thus exemplifying the philosopher's aphorism that "words are wise men's counters, but they are the money of fools." When He told them that the bread which He would give was "His flesh for the life of the world," they had thought merely of His actual flesh and protested "How can this fellow give us his flesh to eat?" And so He now says: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words which I have spoken unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Evidently He was greeted here with renewed clamour; and He addressed to them a final appeal. As the Evangelist has already remarked (cf. ii. 24, 25), He "could read every man"; and He had long ago in His dealings with them read those men who now faced Him in the synagogue. Some of them, as He had previously hinted

(cf. ver. 37), He had no hope of winning, impervious as they were to the persuasions of heavenly grace. Which of His hearers, is His appeal, would place themselves in that unhappy category? "There are some of you who do not believe. Therefore have I said unto you that no one can come unto Me except it be given him of the Father." Here our Lord enunciates the solemn truth that, even as "we prepare ourselves for sudden deeds by the reiterated choice of good or evil which gradually determines character," so men's attitude toward Himself was determined by their prior and habitual dealings with the persuasions of divine grace, the secret "drawings" of the Heavenly Father. And thus there is profound justice in the seemingly flippant dictum of Henry Ward Beecher, that "the elect are whosoever will, and the non-elect whosoever won't."

That meeting in the synagogue of Capernaum was a crisis in our Lord's ministry. It marked the transition from the period of controversy to the period of rejection. "From this point," says the Evangelist, "many of His disciples turned back and walked no more with Him." Their defection grieved Him, all the more that there was no telling how far it might extend. Even the Twelve, sharing as they did the prevailing ideal of the Messianic Kingdom, had shared in the general bewilderment; and anxious to ascertain their disposition, He put to them the question: "Are ye also minded to be gone?" As usual it was Simon Peter who answered; but even he had his misgivings. "Lord," he faltered, "unto whom shall we betake ourselves?" They had been debating the question, and this was the decision which they had reached: where could they find a better teacher? "Thou hast words of eternal life." And whether He were the Messiah or no, of one thing they were persuaded: "We have believed and recognised that Thou art"—not "the Christ, the Son of the Living God," the confession which he afterwards made at Cæsarea Philippi when their doubts had been dispelled (cf. Mt. xvi. 16), but, according to the authentic text,—“the Holy One of God.” It was indeed a brave confession, and if they clung to this assurance at such a time, they would surely attain a larger faith. But did they all cling to it? It was Peter who spoke, and what was in the minds of the others? He

surveyed them with His searching gaze ; and there was one face among them where He read no response. “ Did not I choose you the Twelve ? ” said He. “ And one of you is a devil.” He had read the traitor’s purpose. His disclamature of an earthly throne and His frustration of the wild design to acclaim Him King had shattered that base soul’s worldly dream, and he had already sold himself to the Devil.

PERIOD OF REJECTION

vii-xi. 54

GOING UP TO THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

vii. 1-13

1 *After these things Jesus walked in Galilee : for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.*

2 *Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.*

3 *His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.*

4 *For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.*

5 *For neither did his brethren believe in him.*

6 *Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come : but your time is alway ready.*

7 *The world cannot hate you ; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.*

8 *Go ye up unto this feast : I go not up yet unto this feast ; for my time is not yet full come.*

9 *When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee.*

10 *But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.*

11 *Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he ?*

12 *And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him : for some said, He is a good man : others said, Nay ; but he deceiveth the people.*

13 *Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.*

HERE, marked by the regular phrase "after these things" (cf. iii. 22, v. 1, vi. 1), occurs another break in the narrative. Our Lord absented Himself from the Passover that year. "He was unwilling to walk in Judæa" or, as our Version has it, retaining the quaint phrase of the earlier English versions (cf. Lk. xxi. 5), "in Jewry, because the Jews," that is, the rulers, "were seeking to kill Him." They had decreed His death and were eager to arrest Him, and they would have found a pretext in the mad project of the Galilean enthusiasts to escort Him to Jerusalem and acclaim Him "King of Israel." For it would have been a repudiation of allegiance to the Emperor and the Sanhedrin would have had the support of the imperial government in dealing with Him. He was indeed ready to die when His time came; but He still had work to do, and He would not fling away His life in a wrong cause. And therefore He remained in Galilee, where He was shielded by the popular enthusiasm from the molestation of the rulers.

There He prosecuted His ministry all the summer; and St. John after his wont (cf. Introduction, p. xxix) gives no record of His doings, since the story had already been told by the earlier Evangelists (see Mk. vii-ix. 50 and parallel passages of Mt. and Lk.). In the autumn toward the Feast of Tabernacles (see exposition of Lk. x. 38-42), which fell in the last week of September, He bade farewell to Capernaum and set forth on His journey to Jerusalem. His purpose was not to attend the Feast but to travel slowly through Galilee and Samaria, addressing a last appeal to the towns and villages along the route (cf. Lk. x. 1). Here St. John takes up the story. The scene is evidently Nazareth, the town where our Lord had been brought up and where "His brethren" (see exposition of Mt. xii. 46-50) had their home. They were preparing to set forth on the pilgrimage to the Feast and, still contemptuous of His claims, they received Him ungraciously. Evidently they had heard of the design of the enthusiasts at Capernaum to acclaim Him King, and how He had frustrated it, and how so many of His disciples had abjured Him; and they met Him with a sneer: "Remove hence and be off to Judæa, that thy disciples also may behold thy works which thou art doing. For no one

doeth a thing in private when he is seeking public recognition. If thou art doing these things, manifest thyself to the world." It grieved Him, and He gently remonstrated. It was easy for them to talk thus stoutly. They had nothing to fear, since not only had they never incurred the world's hatred by testifying against its evil works but they had no mission to accomplish. He would indeed go up to Jerusalem in due time, but "My season is not yet come."

Observe the authentic reading in what follows: "Go ye up unto the (not "this") feast. I am not going up unto this feast, because my season hath not yet been fulfilled." The Feast which He had in view was the Passover six months later, when He must die as the Paschal Lamb. The reading "I am *not yet* going up" is not merely an accidental assimilation to the following clause "My season hath not yet been fulfilled" (cf. ver. 6) but a deliberate modification of the text in view of the cavils of unbelievers, like the philosopher Porphyry in the third century who, pointing out how our Lord first declared that He was not going up to the Feast and then went, accused Him of "inconstancy and change." But what is the reason? It is furnished by St. Luke's narrative which our Evangelist here assumes. Our Lord's intention of travelling slowly and preaching as He went was frustrated by the hostility which He encountered on passing the Samaritan frontier (cf. Lk. ix. 51-56). In this His last progress through Samaria He would fain have done at every town and village as He had done at Sychar in the morning of His ministry; but the racial animosity of the populace, ever quick to take offence, had been excited doubtless by the behaviour of Galilean pilgrims on their way to the Feast; and thus Samaria missed the day of her visitation. He passed through the hostile country, "not," as He had intended, "openly" or rather "manifestly, but as it were in secret," shunning observation lest He and His disciples should fall victims to the popular resentment.

And thus He arrived in Judæa while the Feast was in progress. It was now that He paid that memorable visit to the home of Martha and Mary in the village of Bethany (cf. Lk. x. 38-42, where see exposition), supping with them and perhaps

spending the night beneath their hospitable roof ; and there He would learn the state of feeling toward Him in the adjacent capital. He was expected at the Feast, since doubtless He had been seen on the way by other pilgrims ; and the rulers were on the watch for His arrival, eager to apprehend Him. In consequence of recent developments at Capernaum the popular sentiment was divided, but open discussion was checked by the attitude of the rulers.

HIS APPEARANCE AT THE FEAST

vii. 14-36

14 *Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.*

15 *And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man *letters, having never learned ?*

16 *Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.*

17 *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*

18 *He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory : but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.*

19 *Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law ? Why go ye about to kill me ?*

20 *The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil : who goeth about to kill thee ?*

21 *Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.*

22 *Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision ; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers ;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man.*

23 *If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, †that the law of Moses should not be broken ; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day ?*

24 *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*

25 *Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill ?*

26 *But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ ?*

*Or, learning.

† Or, without breaking the law of Moses.

27 *Howbeit we know this man whence he is : but when Christ cometh, no man knowest whence he is.*

28 *Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am : and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.*

29 *But I know him : for I am from him, and he hath sent me.*

30 *Then they sought to take him : but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.*

31 *And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done ?*

32 *The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him ; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.*

33 *Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me.*

34 *Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me : and where I am, thither ye cannot come.*

35 *Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him ? will he go unto the dispersed among the *Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles ?*

36 *What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me and shall not find me : and where I am, thither ye cannot come ?*

OUR Lord reached Jerusalem "when it was now the middle of the Feast," "when the Feast was halfway through," that is, on the fourth day of the sacred week; and He went straight to the Temple and started teaching the people who thronged the outer court. It was His safest course, since the rulers durst not risk an uproar by arresting Him there; and by a prompt appeal to the multitude He might rally the waverers to His side and thus fortify Himself against attack. And so it turned out. The Evangelist gives no report of His teaching but hastens to tell what ensued, and his narrative is a vivid portrayal of a critical situation which issued in our Lord's rehabilitation in the popular esteem and the corresponding discomfiture of the rulers. Some of the latter—Pharisees, as

* Or, *Greeks*.

the Evangelist presently states (cf. ver. 32) and their zeal for the Law indicates—were present and heard His discourse, and it surprised them, so wise and beautiful as it was, so unlike what might have been expected from a Galilean peasant. “How,” they exclaimed, “is this fellow so learned, uneducated as he is!” Their sneer afforded Him an opportunity of dealing with them and publicly reaffirming and vindicating His claim. The quality of His teaching would indeed be inexplicable were He nothing more than He seemed in their eyes; and the explanation thereof was that He was more, much more. He was God’s ambassador. “My teaching is not Mine but His who sent Me.” Did they require evidence of His divine commission? It lay to their hands—a twofold evidence. (1) “If any man have the will to do His will, he will come to know as regards the teaching whether it is of God or is My own talk,” literally “I am talking from Myself”—“of My own initiative.” It was a sharp rebuke. The will of God was the last consideration of those rulers, animated as they were by official arrogance, jealous resentment, and insolent contempt; and if only they would clear their minds of prejudice, and reverence that sense of truth and right which is the Holy Spirit’s testimony in man’s soul, they would recognise in His teaching the voice of God. It was a saying of Plato that “every soul is unwillingly deprived of the truth”; and the very bitterness of their animosity was an evidence that their consciences were ill at ease. (2) Our Lord’s acknowledgment that His teaching was not His own proved His commission; for if it were “His own talk,” if He were “talking of His own initiative,” He would claim the glory of it.

And now He proceeds to reason with them. They had determined to put Him to death for blasphemy on the double count of His violation of the Sabbath and His claim to deity; and the particular instance whereon they built their charge was His healing of the paralytic at Bethesda on the occasion of His last visit to Jerusalem some eighteen months ago (cf. v. 18). He had indeed violated the letter of the Mosaic Law; but it was impossible to keep the letter of the Law in actual practice, since cases continually arose where precepts conflicted and to observe one precept was to violate another; and the Scribes recognised

this in their elaborate system of casuistry. "None of you," He says, "doeth the Law." And how could they condemn Him on that score? "Why are ye seeking to kill Me?" The rulers would perceive His reference, and so would the citizens of Jerusalem; but these were but a minority of His audience, mainly composed as it was of worshippers who had come up to the Feast from all quarters and who had only heard of the fame of His miracles and His overflowing popularity and knew nothing of the Sanhedrin's machinations. They were astonished. "Thou hast a devil," they cried, meaning "Thou art mad" (cf. x. 20; Mt. xi. 18). He ignored the rude interruption and proceeded with His argument, making good His allegation that "none of them did the Law." Observe here that "therefore" (ver. 22) belongs properly to the previous verse: "I did one work (the healing of the paralytic), and ye are all marvelling thereat. Moses gave you circumcision." Of all their sacred institutions there was none which the Jews so prized as this rite—the seal of the Covenant, distinguishing them from the Gentiles, those "uncircumcised dogs." It was older than Moses, since it had been given to Abraham as the seal of the covenant which the Lord made with him and his seed after him in their generations (Gen. xvii. 10–13); but it was re-enacted by the Law of Moses, and here lies the force of our Lord's argument. The Law required that a child should be circumcised "on the eighth day" (cf. Lev. xii. 3; Lk. ii. 21; Phil. iii. 5); and if the eighth day were a Sabbath, then despite the commandment "In it thou shalt not do any work" the work of circumcision was performed. Since they thus permitted the wounding of a child's flesh, with what reason were the Scribes wroth at His making a man every whit whole on the Sabbath?

And now the Evangelist shows how the situation was affected by this our Lord's first appearance on the perilous scene. As regards the rulers, His argument was unanswerable, and they could only stand by in impotent chagrin. And what of the rest, the crowd which thronged the Temple-court? Some of them were citizens of Jerusalem, versed in theological disputation; and, cognisant as they were of the feeling of the

rulers and largely sympathetic therewith, they were surprised at their inaction. What might it mean? "Can it be," said some, "that the rulers have indeed recognised that this man is the Messiah?" "No," retorted others, displaying their theological acumen, "we know this man whence he is; and when the Messiah cometh, no one perceives whence He is." So the Rabbis taught. "If," says the Jew in St. Justin Martyr's Dialogue, "Messiah is born and exists somewhere, He is unrecognised and does not even know Himself nor has He any power until Elijah come (cf. i. 21) and anoint Him and make Him manifest to all." Their contention reached our Lord's ears, and He interposed. "Ye both know Me," He cried (cf. i. 15), "and know whence I am!" So they fancied, but did they indeed? "I have not come on Mine own errand (literally "from Myself"; cf. vers. 17, 18), but He that sent Me is true," more precisely "is real," a real and not a fictitious personage, "whom ye know not. I know Him, and He commissioned Me." It was a reiteration of the claim which He had already advanced and demonstrated in His dispute with the rulers (cf. vers. 16-18) and which they had been unable to refute; and what could those theological laymen say? Thus were His adversaries put to silence. "Therefore, though they were seeking to arrest Him, no one laid his hand upon Him, because," adds the Evangelist, "His hour had not yet come," meaning that it was no mere subtlety of dialectic that had extricated our Lord from His embarrassment but the overruling providence of God—another exemplification of Thomas Fuller's comfortable word that "God's children are immortal while their Father hath any thing for them to do on earth."

There were others in the crowd which thronged the Temple-court besides "them of Jerusalem" or, as it is in the original, "the Jerusalemites." Far more numerous were the extern worshippers, not merely Judæans and Galileans but "the Dispersion of the Greeks," as they were called—Jews resident abroad who, according to custom, had come up to the Holy City to celebrate the Feast. It is to these especially that the Evangelist refers when he now tells that "many of (not "the people" but) the multitude believed in Him." The fame of

His ministry in Galilee had impressed them, and the discourse which they had just heard from His lips (cf. ver. 14) had won their hearts; and they made short work of the theological quibble of the Jerusalemites that, when the Messiah came, no one would recognise whence He was. "When the Messiah cometh," was their answer, "will He do more signs than those which this man hath done?" So large an accession to the ranks of our Lord's supporters discomfited the Pharisees. It seemed as though their victim would escape them; and, probably next morning, the Sanhedrin—denoted here by the regular phrase (R.V.) "the Chief Priests and the Pharisees" (cf. Mt. ii. 4)—convened to consider the situation. His popularity made it difficult for them to deal with Him, but the difficulty was likely to increase with every day that passed. Prompt action was expedient, and they—not "sent" but—"commissioned officers," sergeants of the court, to effect His arrest. It was a secret commission to be warily carried out, as opportunity might occur, without exciting a disturbance.

Meanwhile our Lord was continuing His ministry in the Temple-court. Though shunning another encounter with Him, the rulers kept Him in close observation; and they heard much that exasperated them and much also that puzzled them. Here is an example. In His discourse He made an appeal for immediate decision which was often on His lips in those last days when His ministry was nearing its close (cf. viii. 21, xiii. 36): "A little while longer am I with you, and I go away unto Him that sent Me. Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me; and where I am ye cannot come." What could He mean? they wondered; and the explanation which presented itself to their minds in view of the attitude of the extern worshippers toward Him, was that He intended to migrate from the Holy Land and address His message to "the Dispersion of the Greeks."

THE LAST DAY OF THE FEAST

vii. 37-52

37 *In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.*

38 *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

39 *(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive : for the Holy Ghost was not yet given ; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

40 *Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.*

41 *Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee ?*

42 *Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was ?*

43 *So there was a division among the people because of him.*

44 *And some of them would have taken him ; but no man laid hands on him.*

45 *Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees ; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him ?*

46 *The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.*

47 *Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived ?*

48 *Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him ?*

49 *But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.*

50 *Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came *to Jesus by night, being one of them,)*

51 *Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth ?*

52 *They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee ? Search, and look : for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.*

* Gr. to him.

THE last day was the great day of the Feast, being distinguished by a singularly impressive ceremonial. As on the previous days the worshippers were employed in joyful thanksgiving for the ingathered harvest, so on the last day they took thought of the coming year and prayed that it too might be blessed with rich increase. A priest repaired to the Pool of Siloam and, filling thence a golden pitcher, bore it to the Temple, escorted by the worshippers in jubilant procession. In the outer court three other priests received them with the greeting: "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Is. xii. 3); and the pitcher was conveyed to the altar and the water, mingled with wine, was poured into a silver basin, whence it filtered down by a conduit into the winter-torrent of the Kidron.

The scene furnished our Lord with a theme. When the ceremonial was over, He took His stand in the Temple-court and not merely "said" but "cried," like a water-carrier in the city-street to the thirsty passers by: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink!" "Ho, every one that thirsteth! come ye to the waters" (Is. lv. 1). The people would gather round Him, and He expounded His parable to them. Of His discourse the Evangelist has preserved only a sentence, brief but very significant: "He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." This is not a formal quotation but rather a summary of various apt passages of Holy Writ: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground"; "and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (cf. Is. xlv. 3, lviii. 11), and the like. On such familiar passages He based His discourse; and the Evangelist's brief report suggests the argument thereof. (1) As in His conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well (cf. iv. 13, 14), He showed how His grace was no mere passing shower which the thirsty ground soon drinks up, but a deep, perennial spring, making the soul which receives it truly "like a watered garden," green and unwithering in time of drought. And (2) He introduced most fittingly the promise of the Holy Spirit, no mere divine effluence as the Old Testament conceived,

but according to His fuller revelation a Divine Person, the Recreator and Sanctifier, whom He would send after His departure.

It is no wonder that His discourse is so meagrely recorded : for, dealing with a theme meanwhile so novel, it would at the moment largely transcend the comprehension even of the Twelve and even of the Beloved Disciple. Nevertheless it profoundly moved His audience, even the uninstructed multitude. For amid its yet unrevealed mysteries there was much which appealed to the simplest ; and it may well be that here is the proper setting of that golden saying which St. Matthew has preserved, introducing it disconnectedly into his narrative—the Gracious Invitation (xi. 28–30, where see exposition) : “ Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.” What marvel that a discourse thus blending high mystery and tender appeal was diversely received ? Simple hearts were touched ; and some took Him for the Prophet, the Messiah’s forerunner (cf. i. 21), while some were persuaded that He was surely the Messiah Himself. But there were others, doubtless the theologically minded Jerusalemites (cf. vers. 25–27), who scorned the suggestion. For He belonged, as they knew Him, to despised Galilee ; and, they argued, in their ignorance of His true origin (cf. Mt. ii. 1 ; Lk. ii. 4) unwittingly attesting His claim, it was written that the Messiah would be born at Bethlehem (cf. Mt. ii. 4–6).

Evidently the dissension was fanned by the malignant rulers who were mingled with the crowd ; and it grew very hot. “ There arose,” says the Evangelist, “ a cleavage in the multitude because of Him ” ; and the rulers, fancying that their opportunity had arrived, bade their officers arrest Him, and, hastening to their council-chamber, constituted the court of the Sanhedrin. They waited impatiently for the appearance of the officers with the prisoner in charge ; and at length they appeared without Him. “ Why did ye not bring him ? ” they demanded. The answer is variously given. Many manuscripts, followed by our Version, have : “ Never man so spake as this man ” or “ as this man speaketh ” ; but preferable is the simpler reading “ Never man so spake.” And how significant it is ! The officers had been impressed by our Lord’s discourse ; and

when at the bidding of their masters they approached Him with the intention of arresting Him, He had talked with them and His grace had conquered them. Their souls had bowed before Him, and they durst not lay hands on Him. Their excuse was a confession; nor was it lost upon the Sanhedrists. For they did not tax their officers with insubordination. It was the Pharisees that spoke, and their answer was an exclamation of chagrin at this fresh evidence of their adversary's wizardry. "Have ye also been led astray?" they cried. And then they remonstrated with the officers, representing that men in their privileged and responsible position should have known better. "Hath any of the rulers believed in Him? or," they added in the pride of their own order, "any of the Pharisees?"—any of themselves, the learned Scribes, who were qualified to decide the theological questions at issue. It was only the ignorant rabble that had been led astray; and "this multitude that understandeth not the Law, they are accursed"—a sentence which breathes the true Pharisaic spirit of contempt for the vulgar herd, "the people of the land" (Ezk. vii. 27).

As though in reproof thereof a protest was raised from their own party. It came from that good old Rabbi, Nicodemus, who at the beginning of our Lord's ministry (for "by night" read "before") had interviewed Him (cf. iii. 1-21) and, though still undecided, cherished in his heart what he had then heard from those blessed lips. His objection, courteously and somewhat timidly urged, was that his colleagues had no right thus to assume the guilt of one who was as yet untried. It angered them, and they turned upon him with a sneer: "Art thou also of Galilee?" The northern province was despised by the proud Judæans, and on their lips "a Galilean" meant an ignorant boor. "Search (the same word as in v. 39)," said they, "and see that of Galilee no prophet ariseth," forgetting in the blindness of their prejudice that Galilee had been the scene of the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, and that Jonah and probably Nahum and Hosea had been Galileans. Thus they silenced Nicodemus, but his protest was in no wise unavailing. Revealing as it did that even in their own ranks our Lord had sympathisers, it restrained them from immediate action.

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY

vii. 53-viii. 11

53 *And every man went unto his own house.*

1 *Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.*

2 *And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him ; and he sat down, and taught them.*

3 *And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery ; and when they had set her in the midst,*

4 *They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.*

5 *Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned : but what sayest thou ?*

6 *This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.*

7 *So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*

8 *And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.*

9 *And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last : and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.*

10 *When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers ? hath no man condemned thee ?*

11 *She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee : go, and sin no more.*

ON the indubitable evidence of our oldest manuscripts and the early Fathers and also of its language, so different from the characteristic language of St. John, this exceeding precious passage is no part of our Gospel. Like not a few others happily preserved on the sacred pages (cf. Lk. ix. 55, 56, where see exposition) it is a genuine fragment of the abundant evangelic tradition inserted by some devout reader of early days on the margin of his copy of the Gospel by way of illustration, doubtless over against viii. 15, and thence imported into the text by a later copyist. It is very noteworthy that in several of the manuscripts which contain it the passage stands at the close of Lk. xxi; and this is unquestionably its actual position—among our Lord's encounters with the rulers during the Passion-week when they assailed Him with captious questions in the hope of "ensnaring Him in argument" (Mt. xxii. 15; Mk. xii. 13) and putting Him to confusion before the multitude.

At the Passover-season there was scant accommodation in the crowded city, and His custom was to spend the day teaching in the Temple-court and retire at nightfall with the Twelve to the Garden of Gethsemane (cf. Lk. xxi. 37, 38); and so it is written here that "every man went unto his own house, but Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives." It was a cunning snare that those Scribes spread for Him next morning when, heartlessly blazoning her shame, they haled that poor sinner before Him. The ancient law was that she and the partner of her sin should be stoned to death (cf. Lev. xx. 10; Dt. xxii. 22-24): "What then sayest thou?" They expected that He would reprobate the inhuman ordinance of a rude age, and then they would have raised the cry of sacrilege; whereas, had He approved it, they would have convicted Him of inconsistency; for was He not "the Friend of Sinners," and had He not a Magdalene among His followers?

And what was His decision? He made no reply but "stooped down and with His finger was writing on the ground." The ancient interpreters, ever seeking a mystic significance in the plainest words of Holy Writ, exercised their ingenuity on the question what it was that He wrote and wherefore He wrote it. St. Augustine, for example, saw here a picturesque announcement

of the difference between the Law and the Gospel. God wrote the Law with His finger on tables of stone (Ex. xxxi. 18), emblematic of the hard hearts of the Jewish people ; our Lord wrote on the ground, like a husbandman furrowing the soil, because He looked for a harvest. According to another fancy He was intimating to the Scribes that their names were, in the prophet's phrase (Jer. xvii. 13), " written in the earth " and not " written in Heaven " (cf. Lk. x. 20). And Dr. John Lightfoot, that eminent Hebraist of the seventeenth century, found an explanation in the ritual of the ancient " trial of jealousy," where the priest pronounced the curses against unfaithfulness and wrote them in a book, and required the accused to drink holy water mingled with dust from the floor of the Tabernacle (cf. Num. v. 11-31). These are but idle imaginations ; and all that need be said was said by Euthymius Zigabenus, that good monk of Constantinople, when he wrote at the beginning of the twelfth century that "' Jesus stooped down and with His finger was writing on the ground,' as they are often wont to do who are unwilling to answer inopportune and unworthy questions." His writing was a mere scribbling with His nervous finger, as one does involuntarily in moods of abstraction or embarrassment, tracing letters, perhaps his own name, without knowledge or intention. Whatever it may have been that He thus scribbled, it left no imprint, since the scene was the Temple-court and the ground which He scribbled on was the hard, clean pavement.

And what was it that so moved Him ? Was it, as Seeley wrote in his *Ecce Homo*, that " He was seized with an intolerable sense of shame " ? " He could not meet the eye of the crowd, or of the accusers, and perhaps at the moment least of all of the woman." Surely it was more than that ; for that were mere prudery, and prudery is not shame but the affectation thereof. A pure soul's shame is a flush of indignant scorn, and this it was that now kindled in our Lord's breast and tingled in His cheeks. It was not because He could not meet the woman's eye that He stooped down and scribbled on the ground ; for presently when they two were left alone—*misera et Misericordia*, as St. Augustine has it, " the piteous one and Pity," He freely faced her. It was not from her but from her shameless accusers

that He hid His face, scorning for very shame to look upon them; and the truest commentary on the scene is His own terrible word (Mk. viii. 38): "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of the Father with the holy angels."

They thought He was confounded and gleefully pressed Him for an answer. But their triumph was shortlived. He lifted His burning face. "He that is without sin among you," said He, "let him first cast his stone at her"; and then He stooped down and resumed His scribbling. Conscience-stricken, without exchanging a word or a look they stole away one by one. It was the rule that when a vote was taken in the Sanhedrin on a capital charge, the youngest member should give his vote first; but now they did not stand upon the order of their going. The elder, best knowing the plague of their hearts, were the first to steal away. So quietly they withdrew that only the stillness apprised the Lord that they were gone; and lifting His face He "beheld (cf. i. 14) none but the woman." "Woman," said He or rather, since it is a gentle and appealing form of address in the original, "My woman, where are those thine accusers? Did no one condemn thee?" "No one, sir," she answered. The encircling crowd would be all eyes and ears, curious how He would deal with her. And what did they hear from His holy lips? No condemnation of her sin, no admonition to repent. It was not that He made light of the wrong which she had done, but that He read in her glowing face the shame which was burning in her heart. In truth she had enough of blame. "Retribution may come from any voice: the hardest, cruelest, most imbruted urchin at the street-corner can inflict it: surely help and pity are rarer things—more needful for the righteous to bestow." And these He gave her. "Neither do I condemn thee. Go thy way, and sin no more." It was more than absolution: it was trust. Nor would she belie it.

AN ENCOUNTER AT THE TREASURY

viii. 12-20

12 *Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world : he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

13 *The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself ; thy record is not true.*

14 *Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true : for I know whence I came, and whither I go ; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.*

15 *Ye judge after the flesh ; I judge no man.*

16 *And yet if I judge, my judgment is true : for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.*

17 *It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.*

18 *I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.*

19 *Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father ? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father : if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.*

20 *These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple : and no man laid hands on him ; for his hour was not yet come.*

THE Feast of Tabernacles was now over (cf. vii. 37), but our Lord did not return to Galilee ; for He had finished His ministry there, and He remained at Jerusalem, making His appeal to her rulers and people. The Evangelist's purpose is to exhibit the ever deepening hostility of the former, hardly restrained from violence by His ever stronger hold on the popular affection ; and this he exemplifies by a series of incidents in the course of His daily ministry.

It was now late autumn, probably the month of October, when the days were short ; and as He taught by the Treasury (cf. Mk. xii. 41 and Lk. xxi. 1, where see exposition), the shadows of evening fell and the lamps were lighted in the Temple-court. After His wont He turned the scene into a parable : " I am the Light of the world." It was an offence to the Pharisees who were listening jealously ; for not merely was " the Light " a Rabbinical title of the Messiah but eminent Rabbis were styled " lights " inasmuch as they " enlightened the eyes with the traditions of the wise." It seemed to those Pharisees that in calling Himself " the Light of the world " our Lord was touching the dignity of their order ; and they raised again their pedantic objection that a man's testimony on his own behalf was invalid (cf. v. 31). And what was His answer ? He told them that He was not pleading in a law-court but announcing a high truth with the authority of One who had come from God and was going to God. He knew " whence He had come and whither He was going," and had they known it, they would never have quoted that legal maxim. They " were judging after the flesh," perceiving only His human weakness and missing His divine glory ; He " was judging no man "—making no comparison between Himself and their wise men. But even if He were, His judgment was true. For it was supported by the testimony of the Father who had sent Him, a testimony expressed in the works which He wrought in the Father's name ; and was there not another maxim of their Law, that " at the mouth of two witnesses shall a matter be established " (cf. Dt. xvii. 6, xix. 15) ? They retorted with a stupid jeer, bidding Him produce His fellow-witness : " Where is thy Father ? " And He replied with merited severity that they knew neither Him nor His Father. Had they known Him, they would have known the Father, since in Him the Father was revealed (cf. xiv. 8, 9).

It was a sharp encounter, and it was a marvel that the exasperated rulers let Him go. They were indeed restrained by the fear of a popular tumult ; but here again (cf. vii. 30) the Evangelist recognises a deeper and truer reason for His immunity. " No one"—not " laid hands upon Him " but—"arrested Him, because His hour had not yet come."

A COARSE SCOFF

viii. 21-30

21 *Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins : whither I go, ye cannot come.*

22 *Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself ? because he saith Whither I go, ye cannot come.*

23 *And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath ; I am from above : ye are of this world ; I am not of this world.*

24 *I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins : for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*

25 *Then said they unto him, Who art thou ? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.*

26 *I have many things to say and to judge of you : but he that sent me is true ; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.*

27 *They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.*

28 *Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself ; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.*

29 *And he that sent me is with me : the Father hath not left me alone ; for I do always those things that please him.*

30 *As he spake these words, many believed on him.*

ON another occasion, while preaching to the people in the Temple-court, He repeated in more solemn terms His appeal for immediate decision in view of His imminent departure (cf. vii. 34). " I am going away, and where I go, ye cannot come." The rulers who were present interrupted Him with an outburst of derision. Certainly He was mad (cf. vii. 20, viii. 48, 52), they cried ; and one of them passed a brutal jest : " Will he kill himself ? " suggesting that the mad-man meditated doing away with himself, and would be banished

to that darker Hell where, according to the Jewish belief, suicides had their portion.

It was brutal ribaldry, and He treated it with just scorn. It proved that they and He belonged to different worlds; and surely their doom was sealed. "For unless ye believe that I am He (the Promised Saviour), ye shall die in your sins." "Thou—who art thou?" they sneered. And what was His answer? Rightly interpreted, it was a pained and impatient exclamation: "O that I am even talking to you at all!" It was wasted breath. He would talk *to* them no more. Not that He was done with them. "I have many things to talk and judge of you; but He who sent Me is true, and things which I heard of Him (too sacred to be subjected to their cavilling), these I talk to the world," no longer reasoning with them but openly denouncing them.

It is at the first glance surprising to read that "they did not recognise that He was speaking to them of the Father." For had He not in the previous encounter (cf. ver. 18) made it plain that the Father was "He who had sent Him"? But observe that not only were these two encounters distinct, separated by an interval probably of weeks, but they were different personages that our Lord had to do with. In the former they were "the Pharisees" (cf. ver. 13)—Scribes apt at theological discussion; here they are "the Jews"—the Evangelist's phrase for "the rulers" (cf. i. 19), the official representatives of the rival parties of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. And that they were in this instance Sadducees, priestly guardians of the sacred precincts, appears not merely from their theological ineptitude but from their insolence—a quality which, as the Jewish historian Josephus affirms, was characteristic of their proud order. It was the Chief Priests, their supreme dignitaries, who were foremost in compassing our Lord's crucifixion; and hence the significance of His solemn answer to their questioning: "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye recognise that I am He." Their insolence defeated their own end. It alienated the people's sympathy and turned their hearts to our Lord; and "many believed in Him."

CONFERENCE WITH UNDECIDED PHARISEES

viii. 31-59

31 *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed ;*

32 *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

33 *They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man : how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free ?*

34 *Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*

35 *And the servant abideth not in the house for ever : but the Son abideth ever.*

36 *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

37 *I know that ye are Abraham's seed ; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.*

38 *I speak that which I have seen with my Father : and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.*

39 *They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.*

40 *But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God : this did not Abraham.*

41 *Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication ; we have one Father, even God.*

42 *Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me : for I proceeded forth and came from God ; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.*

43 *Why do ye not understand my speech ? even because ye cannot hear my word.*

44 *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father*

ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own : for he is a liar, and the father of it.

45 *And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.*

46 *Which of you convinceth me of sin ? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me ?*

47 *He that is of God heareth God's words : ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.*

48 *Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil ?*

49 *Jesus answered, I have not a devil ; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.*

50 *And I seek not mine own glory : there is one that seeketh and judgeth.*

51 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*

52 *Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets ; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.*

53 *Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead ? and the prophets are dead : whom makest thou thyself ?*

54 *Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing : it is my Father that honoureth me ; of whom ye say, that he is your God :*

55 *Yet ye have not known him ; but I know him : and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you : but I know him, and keep his saying.*

56 *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day : and he saw it, and was glad.*

57 *Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham ?*

58 *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*

59 *Then took they up stones to cast at him : but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.*

OBSERVE that this narrative is not the immediate sequel of the last. It is another in the series of incidents by which the Evangelist illustrates the progress of our Lord's ministry at Jerusalem, and it is separated from the last by some interval of time. And who were the persons that now appear on the scene? They are defined as, not "those Jews which *believed on Him*," but "the Jews who had *believed Him*"; and the distinction is very significant. According to the Greek idiom to "believe in Him" (cf. ver. 30) or otherwise "believe on Him" denoted the whole-hearted surrender of faith; whereas to "believe Him" meant merely a recognition of the truth of His statements and the justice of His reasoning. And thus those men had only taken the first step toward discipleship. Their minds assented, but their hearts were not yet won; and the Evangelist here tells how the Lord sought to lead them on from mere belief to faith. They were "Jews," that is, rulers (cf. i. 19); and that they were Pharisees and not, as in the previous instance, Sadducees is evident from their Rabbinical argumentation. Moreover, while many Pharisees were well disposed toward Him in the days of His flesh (cf. Introduction, p. xxi) and not a few, like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa, subsequently took their places in the ranks of His disciples (cf. Ac. xv. 5), it does not appear that He ever won a single Sadducee. And where was the scene of the conference? It was within the precincts of the Temple (cf. ver. 59); but it was not the Temple-court. For it is written that at the close of the conference "they took up stones to cast at Him," and there were no loose stones in the paved court. At that time Herod's magnificent Temple, begun forty-eight years ago (cf. ii. 20), was still incomplete; and if, as appears in the course of the narrative, the conference was held in the evening when the day's work was done, it is likely that our Lord conducted those inquirers from the Temple-court to the now deserted scene of operations and conversed with them amid the litter of masonry.

The Evangelist does not report the conversation at length, but begins at the critical point where dissension arose. Our Lord allowed that in "believing Him" those Pharisees had made a good beginning. But it was only a beginning, and He

shows them the pathway from belief to faith. "If ye abide in My word, ye are truly My disciples." Here is the universal law of larger attainment. "Try," said Rembrandt to his impatient pupil Hoogstraten, "to put well in practice what you already know. In so doing you will, in good time, discover the hidden things which you now inquire about." And even so our Lord counsels those Pharisees to practise the lessons which they had already received from His lips, and thus they would reach a larger and fuller faith. "Ye shall recognise the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

They took this as a reference to their national humiliation and, patriots as they were, unlike the time-serving Sadducees, it touched them in the quick. Oblivious of the long tragedy of their national history, their enslavement to the Egyptians, to the Assyrians, to the Greeks, and now to the Romans, they broke into angry protest: "We are Abraham's seed, and to none have we ever yet been slaves." He explained that He was not speaking of national but of spiritual bondage and deliverance from a worse than heathen tyranny. "Every one that doeth sin is a slave" (the variant reading "the slave of sin" is an assimilation to Rom. vi. 16, 20). "Only the wise man," said the Stoics, "is free."

He is the free man whom the truth makes free
And all are slaves besides.

And so our Lord continues, showing how the truth makes men free: "The slave abideth not in the house for ever; the son abideth for ever. If therefore the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." "The Son" was a Jewish title of the Messiah (cf. Mt. iii. 17); and He made men free since He not merely emancipated them from sin's bondage but by making them His brethren gave them the status of sonship in the household of God.

The ensuing dialogue, as it stands in our Version, is much obscured by reason mainly of exegetical manipulations of the original text. Our Lord takes up their Pharisaic boast that they were "Abraham's seed" and shows, as John the Baptist had already done (cf. Mt. iii. 9) and as St. Paul did afterwards

(cf. Gal. iii. 7, 29; Rom. ix. 7), how little it availed them to have Abraham's blood in their veins without Abraham's spirit in their hearts. "I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye"—ye Pharisees—"are seeking to kill Me, because My word hath no place in you." His word was the revelation which He had brought from Heaven. "The things which I have seen with the Father"—in the glory which He had with the Father before the world was (cf. xvii. 5)—"I am speaking. Do ye also therefore the things which ye heard"—at His lips—"from the Father." Resenting the admonition, they answered: "Our father is Abraham," counting this a sufficient defence, since, being Abraham's children and therefore heirs of the Covenant, they were right with God. "If," He retorted, challenging their vain confidence, "ye are children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham. As it is, ye are seeking to kill Me, a man who has spoken the truth to you—the truth which I heard from God. This Abraham did not do. Do the works of your father." "If ye are children of Abraham" He had said, and the doubt angered them. "We are no bastard breed," they asseverated; "we have one Father—God," meaning that they were true-born Israelites, since, in ancient parlance, God was the Father of the Holy Nation (see exposition of Mt. iii. 17).

Observe the turn of the argument here. Our Lord has been striving to lift the minds of those Pharisees from their narrow idea of God as the God of Abraham and his seed after him and the God of Israel to His revelation of a Universal Fatherhood, embracing all the children of men and seeking the deliverance of sinners, lost children of God but children still, from their sore bondage—the glad tidings which He, the Eternal Son, had brought from the Father. But to this they could not rise and had always kept harking back to their low conception. "We are Abraham's seed" they first insisted; then "Our father is Abraham"; and finally "We have one Father—God," signifying merely that they were true-born Israelites. And so He takes up this last claim and deals with it as He had dealt with the others. A true son is worthy of his father; and just as He had bidden them prove themselves children of Abraham by doing the works of Abraham, so now, "If," says He, "God

were your Father, ye would love Me ; for from God came I forth and am here. I have not come on Mine own errand : it was He that commissioned Me." A son understands his father's language, and it proved them no sons of God but aliens that they did not understand the message which God had sent them. " Why do ye not recognise My speech ? Because ye cannot hear My word." The evidence of sonship is affinity ; and on this score they were no sons of God. They were rather sons of the Devil, a murderer from of old and the father of lies ; and they proved their affinity with him by their murderous designs against Himself, all because He had told them the truth. There was no other reason. For " which of you convicteth Me of sin ? If I am speaking truth, wherefore are ye not believing Me ? One who is of God heareth God's sayings. Therefore it is that ye are not hearing—because ye are not of God."

Just because it was unanswerable His argument enraged them, and they fell to abuse. " Say we not well," they cried, " that thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil (cf. vii. 20) ? " that is, a heretic and a madman. When they styled Him " a Samaritan," they may have had in mind the grace which He had shown that hated race (cf. iv. 1-42) ; but apart from this it was a peculiarly opprobrious designation. It was an epithet which the Rabbis bestowed on those who neglected the study of the Law ; and thus it amounts here to a charge of sacrilege against our Lord for His handling of their boast of Abrahamic descent. He quietly answered that He was not mad, and the reason why they so dishonoured Him was that He honoured His Father by esteeming His Fatherhood more highly than the fatherhood of Abraham. " But," He adds, " I am not seeking Mine own glory. There is One that seeketh it and judgeth." His honour was safe with God.

Herewith He turns away from the fruitless controversy which had been thrust upon Him, and reverts to His original theme in the hope of yet conducting it to a profitable issue. He had said at the outset (ver. 31) : " If ye abide in My word, ye are truly My disciples " ; and here He resumes : " Verily, verily I say unto you, if a man observe (not " My saying " but) My word, he shall never behold death." Here surely was no

occasion of controversy, yet they found it, Without waiting to hear Him out they took Him to mean physical death and clamorously interrupted: "Now we are sure that thou art mad! Abraham died, and the prophets; and thou sayest 'If a man observe My word, he shall never taste of death.'" So they perverted His statement, substituting a phrase which signified participation in the universal and inevitable experience of natural dissolution (cf. Mt. xvi. 28; Mk. ix. 1; Lk. ix. 27; Heb. ii. 9). What was this, thought they, but a fresh belittlement of Abraham? "Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets also died. Whom makest thou thyself?"

It was a sneer at what they were pleased to regard as arrogant self-glorification; and He answered with a phrase which was then as now proverbial: "If I glorify Myself, My glory is naught. It is My Father that glorifieth Me—He of whom ye say (cf. ver. 41) 'He is our God'; and ye have not recognised Him. But I know Him; and," He adds, reverting to His charge that they had proved themselves sons of the Father of Lies by their rejection of His message though they knew it to be true, "if I say that I do not know Him, I shall be like you a liar. Nay, I know Him and I am observing His word." Then He addressed to them a reproach which was at the same time an appeal, "Your father Abraham (cf. ver. 39) exulted in the hope of seeing My day." Like all the saints of old, Abraham had been cheered by the prospect of the dawning of a better day (cf. Mt. xiii. 16, 17); and now it had come, and in the eternal glory Abraham, like Moses and Elijah (cf. Lk. ix. 30, 31), rejoiced in the accomplishment of his long hope. "Your father Abraham exulted in the hope of seeing My day; and he hath seen it and is gladdened." "Why," is the unspoken appeal, "should not ye share your father Abraham's gladness?" "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear." *O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint.*

But it was lost upon them. They saw in it nothing but sheer raving. "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" Observe how moving a glimpse is here vouchsafed of our Blessed Lord as He appeared while He dwelt

on earth, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was barely three and thirty, yet those Pharisees, judging by His look, took Him for full ten years older. He had been carrying a heavy burden all His days, and it had prematurely aged Him. They had imputed to Him a claim which His words did not actually contain ; yet it was a true claim, and He confirmed it by expressly declaring His eternity : “Verily verily I say unto you, ere Abraham was born have I been.”

This ended the conference. They deemed it blasphemy, and they took up stones wherewith to pelt Him—the blasphemer’s doom (cf. 1 Ki. xxi. 13). They durst not have executed it on the spot, since that would have been a defilement of the Holy Place ; and they meant to drag Him outside the city and there, according to the Law (cf. Lev. xxiv. 14 ; Dt. xxii. 24 ; Ac. vii. 58), do Him to death. But ere they could lay hands on Him He was gone. Warned by their menace, He stole away and disappeared amid the gathering shades of night. “Jesus was hidden and went forth from the Temple.” Thus, according to the true text, the narrative concludes ; and the additional clause—“going through the midst of them, and so passed by”—is a later interpolation (cf. Lk. iv. 30), due to the idea that He wrought the ensuing miracle immediately on His way out of the Temple.

HEALING OF A MAN BORN BLIND

ix. I-12

1 *And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.*

2 *And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind ?*

3 *Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents : but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*

4 *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day : the night cometh, when no man can work.*

5 *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*

6 *When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he *anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,*

7 *And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.*

8 *The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged ?*

9 *Some said, This is he : others said, He is like him : but he said, I am he.*

10 *Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened ?*

11 *He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash : and I went and washed, and I received sight.*

12 *Then said they unto him, Where is he ? He said, I know not.*

OUR Lord had now been over two months at Jerusalem ; for He had arrived there during the Feast of Tabernacles toward the close of September, and it was now near the Feast of Dedication (x. 22) toward the close of December. And here the Evangelist recounts an incident which brought the

* Or, *spread the clay upon the eyes of the blind man.*

hostility of the rulers to a height and compelled His withdrawal from the city. It was a Sabbath Day ; and it may be that, as the interpolation at the close of the previous chapter assumes, the scene was the Gate of the Temple, since that was a favourite station for mendicants (cf. Ac. iii. 1, 2). But there is no evidence of this in the narrative, and it would seem rather to have been the dusty street (cf. ver. 6), where, like blind Bartimæus (cf. Mk. x. 46), the beggar sat craving alms of the passers by. Wherever it may have been, it was his accustomed station, since our Lord's disciples had previously observed him and had learned that he not merely was blind but had been blind from birth.

And this circumstance had raised in their minds a question which evidently they had been debating among themselves. It was a settled dogma of Jewish theology that suffering is always penal, implying antecedent sin (see exposition of Lk. xiii. 1-5), and one who had been stricken blind would accordingly have stood convicted as a sinner. But what of one who had been born blind ? In such a case it was still maintained that the affliction was a penal visitation ; but the sin was thrown farther back, and two theories were propounded. One was that the affliction was hereditary (cf. Ex. xx. 5 ; Ps. li. 5 ; Lam. v. 7), according to the ancient proverb : " The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." This doctrine, though profoundly true, had been somewhat discredited in later days in view of the prophet's protest against its fatalistic perversion (cf. Ezk. xviii) ; and it was generally maintained that even in such a case the sin was personal. It was a Rabbinical fancy that not merely was a child conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity but he might actually sin in his mother's womb, two passages especially being adduced in proof thereof. One was " sin coucheth at the door " (Gen. iv. 7 R.V.), construed as meaning that a child encountered sin like a lurking beast ere his egress into the world ; and the other the story of the birth of Esau and Jacob where it is written (Gen. xxv. 22) that ere Rebekah brought them forth " the children struggled within her," signifying, it was alleged, that their enmity had already begun. More illuminating was the Oriental

belief in the reincarnation of the soul which, familiarised in the West by Pythagoras and Plato, had largely established itself in later Jewish thought, appearing, for example, in the apocryphal *Wisdom of Solomon* (cf. viii. 19, 20), in the philosophy of Philo, and in the creed of the sect of the Essenes. On this theory men reap in each successive incarnation what they have sown in the last, expiating now the sins committed aforetime.

Hence the question which had presented itself to the disciples and which they now submit to the Master: "Rabbi, who sinned—this man or his parents—that he should be born blind?" Our Lord brushed aside both alternatives by ruling out the initial hypothesis that suffering is always penal. It is frequently a providential dispensation designed to serve a high and gracious end. And so it was in the present instance. The man had been born blind "that the works of God might be manifested in him." And adds our Lord, rebuking the idle speculation of His disciples: "We (not 'I') must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day. Night cometh when no man can work." The time had arrived for the manifestation of the providential purpose of that man's affliction; for our Lord had recognised therein an opportunity not merely for working a miracle of compassion but for opening the eyes of the blinded people of Jerusalem, ere it was too late, to the Light which was shining in their midst (cf. viii. 12). It has always been a natural instinct with men in moods of highly wrought emotion to have resort to symbolic action, like Tarquin the Proud when he signified to the envoys of his son Sextus how he should deal with the conquered city of Gabii by striking off the heads of the tallest poppies, or Napoleon when, negotiating with Count Cobentzel, the Austrian plenipotentiary, he took a precious piece of china and, exclaiming "The truce is then ended, and war declared. But beware! I will break your empire into as many fragments as this potsherd," dashed it on the hearth. The fashion was peculiarly congenial to the Jewish mind, and the prophets largely employed it, like Samuel when his mantle was rent by Saul's eager hand, and he said to him "The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day" (cf. 1 Sam. xv. 27, 28); or Ahijah when he laid hold of

his new garment and rent it in twelve pieces and gave ten to Jeroboam, saying, "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee" (cf. 1 Ki. xi. 29-31); or Ezekiel when he took a tile and pourtrayed upon it Jerusalem besieged with forts and battering rams (cf. Ezk. iv. 1, 2); or Agabus when he took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet, and said, "So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle" (cf. Ac. xxi. 10, 11).

During the closing days of His ministry our Lord repeatedly appealed after this fashion to obdurate Jerusalem in the hope of even yet winning her (cf. exposition of Mt. xxi. 1-11); and so He does here. Saliva was credited by ancient physicians, Jewish and Gentile alike, with medicinal efficacy especially in ophthalmic distempers (cf. Mk. viii. 23); and our Lord made clay of the dust of the street and therewith plastered the blind eyes. He had another end in view besides the awakening in the man's breast of that expectancy without which a miracle is impossible (cf. Mt. xiii. 58); and He disclosed it when He bade him betake himself to the Pool of Siloam. The sight of him as he passed along the streets with his face so besmeared, would attract attention, and a crowd would follow him to the pool in the south-east of the city just within the wall, and would witness the miracle—how as he laved his eyes, he got his sight. And the spectacle would set them thinking. It was a proclamation of their own blindness to "the Light of the World." And this the Evangelist indicates when he explains that the Hebrew name Siloam signified "sent" or rather "commissioned"—an interpretation which is none the less apt that it is fanciful, since the reference was properly to the "sending forth" of the water, the gushing of the spring.

And so it happened. The man betook himself to his home in some poor quarter of the city, escorted by a wondering crowd; and neither they nor his neighbours, well as they knew him, could believe that it was indeed he, till he assured them of his identity. They inquired how he had got his sight, and he told them that he owed it to (not "a" but) "the man called Jesus," so notorious in the city in those days, and explained

how He had done it. "Where," they asked, "is the fellow?" —not simply "he," since the pronoun is here emphatic with a touch of contempt (cf. ver. 28). Evidently they were hostile to our Lord, and the Evangelist presently shows the reason when he explains (ver. 22) that their religious authorities had pronounced a sentence of excommunication against any one who should confess Him. Suspecting their intentions, the man answered curtly "I know not."

HIS EXAMINATION AND EXCOMMUNICATION

ix. 13-34

13 *They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.*

14 *And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.*

15 *Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.*

16 *Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles ? And there was a division among them.*

17 *They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes ? He said, He is a prophet.*

18 *But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.*

19 *And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind ? how then doth he now see ?*

20 *His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind :*

21 *But by what means he now seeth, we know not ; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not : he is of age ; ask him : he shall speak for himself.*

22 *These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews : for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.*

23 *Therefore said his parents, He is of age ; ask him.*

24 *Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise : we know that this man is a sinner.*

25 *He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not : one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*

26 *Then said they to him again, What did he to thee ? how opened he thine eyes ?*

27 *He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear : wherefore would ye hear it again ? will ye also be his disciples ?*

28 *Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple ; but we are Moses' disciples.*

29 *We know that God spake unto Moses : as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.*

30 *The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.*

31 *Now we know that God heareth not sinners : but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.*

32 *Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.*

33 *If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.*

34 *They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us ? And they *cast him out.*

IT was a base thing that they did when, instead of rejoicing in their neighbour's good fortune, those people, to clear themselves of the suspicion of complicity, dragged him before the Pharisees, that is, the rulers of their synagogue who had pronounced the ban. It was indeed a serious case, since it was the Sabbath Day and the miracle was thus a violation of the Rabbinical law of Sabbath-observance (cf. v. 16) ; yet it perplexed those dignitaries. For while some of them saw only the illegality of the miracle, others felt the wonder of it and recognised it as an evidence of our Lord's divine commission ; and when in the hope of obtaining fuller light on the case they appealed to the man—a mere lad, intelligent and nimble-witted, very different from the old paralytic of Bethesda, he stoutly supported his Benefactor. “ He is a prophet.”

* Or, *excommunicated him*, ver. 22.

There was nothing for it but to enter upon a judicial investigation of the case ; and with his rare skill in the telling of a story without waste of words the Evangelist indicates their procedure. He now styles them no longer " the Pharisees " but " the Jews "—an official designation, according to his usage (cf. i. 19), showing that they constituted their synagogal court (cf. Mt. x. 17) and put the lad on his trial. First arose the question whether it were a genuine case and not an imposture, and to ascertain this they cited his parents and, removing him meanwhile from the court, addressed to them a threefold interrogation : (1) Was he their son ? (2) Had he really been born blind ? And if so, (3) how had he now his sight ? The first two questions they unhesitatingly answered in the affirmative, but the third was dangerous in view of the menace of excommunication, and they evaded it. " Ask him," said they (according to the true order) : " he is of age," literally " he hath age," meaning that he was old enough to speak for himself, not, as the phrase suggests with us, that he had turned twenty-one but that, according to Jewish usage (cf. Lk. ii. 42), he was over twelve. Thus baulked, they recalled the lad and laid a trap for him. " Give glory to God " said they, meaning not, as our Version suggests, " Ascribe the praise of the miracle to God," but " Glorify God by confessing the truth " (cf. Josh. vii. 19 ; 1 Sam. vi. 5 ; Ezr. x. 11. Scott, *Fair Maid*, chap. xxiii : " Give glory where it is due, my son, even though it is manifest by thy shame. . . . Once more I charge thee to consult thy soul's weal by glorifying Heaven, and speaking the truth "). Their pretence was that they had elicited the facts from his parents and it was useless for him to persist in the imposture. " Give glory to God. We know that this fellow is a sinner." " Be that as it may," he stoutly replied, " one thing I know—that whereas I was blind, now I see." Thus checkmated, they reverted to their original question, how the thing had been done, hoping that he might be betrayed into some inconsistency. But he met them with a cutting sarcasm. " I have told you already : why would ye hear it again ? Would ye also become His disciples ? " They made the fatal blunder of losing their tempers. " Thou art a disciple of the fellow," they stormed ;

“but we are disciples of Moses. This fellow—we know not whence he is.” The lad was blessed with a gift of humour, and keeping cool he fastened on their confession and lectured them with superb insolence: “Why, herein is the marvellous thing! He opened the eyes of one born blind—an unprecedented miracle, impossible without God, and yet ye wise men, the teachers of Israel, ‘know not whence He is’!” This ended the case. “Dost thou teach us?” they cried; and “they cast him out”—not merely out of doors but out of their fellowship, excommunicating him.

THE TRUE SHEPHERD

ix. 35-x. 18

35 *Jesus heard that they had cast him out ; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God ?*

36 *He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him ?*

37 *And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.*

38 *And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.*

39 *And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see ; and that they which see might be made blind.*

40 *And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also ?*

41 *Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin : but now ye say, We see ; therefore your sin remaineth.*

1 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.*

2 *But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.*

3 *To him the porter openeth ; and the sheep hear his voice : and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.*

4 *And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him : for they know his voice.*

5 *And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him : for they know not the voice of strangers.*

6 *This parable spake Jesus unto them : but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.*

7 *Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.*

8 *All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers : but the sheep did not hear them.*

9 *I am the door : by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

10 *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy : I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

11 *I am the good shepherd : the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*

12 *But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth : and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.*

13 *The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.*

14 *I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.*

15 *As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father : and I lay down my life for the sheep.*

16 *And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold : them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*

17 *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.*

18 *No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*

OUR Lord was not done with the man when He had smeared his eyes and sent him to the Pool of Siloam. He kept Himself informed of the subsequent proceedings, and on learning the issue He "found him," which means in St. John's parlance (cf. i. 41) that He went in quest of him. And where did He find him? Not in the Temple, which was no place for an excommunicated outcast, but in the poor locality where he dwelt and whither he had betaken himself from the court of the synagogue. It was the first time he had ever seen the Lord, but already he had heard His gracious voice and he

would recognise who the stranger was that now accosted him. Observe the question. "Dost thou believe," our Version has, "on (rather "in") *the Son of God?*" And this the man would at once have understood. For "the Son of God" meant "the Messiah," "the Christ" (see exposition of Mt. iii. 17); and it was for confessing his Benefactor as the Christ that he had been excommunicated (cf. ver. 22). Had he been asked if he believed in "the Son of God," he would have answered "Yea, Lord, and it is for this very reason that I am an outcast." But according to the chief authorities the question was "Dost thou believe in *the Son of Man?*" and this puzzled him. "The Son of Man" was our Lord's chosen self-designation, familiar to all who knew Him, expressing His sympathy with the lowly and repudiating the Jewish dream of the Messiah as a national deliverer (see exposition of i. 51); and He employs it here not merely to inspire the outcast with a truer and deeper faith but to carry his thoughts away from that bitter contention and save him from the further aggression which an open confession of His Messiahship would have provoked. "Dost thou believe," He asked, "in the Son of Man?" "And who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?" was the reply. Observe its significance. Is there not in it a tone of disappointment? He had already confessed his faith in his Benefactor; and now it seemed as though He were claiming it for another, and his heart leaped up in gladness when he learned his mistake. "Thou hast seen Him," saith the Lord; "He that is talking with thee is He" (cf. iv. 26).

A crowd had gathered, including some of the Pharisees who had pronounced the sentence of excommunication and were jealously watching the offender. And here our Lord found an opportunity for enforcing the lesson of His dealing with the latter. It was, as we have seen, an acted parable, a picturesque appeal to the blinded people of Jerusalem to open their eyes to "the Light of the World." "It was for judgment," said He, "that I came into the world, that the unseeing may see and the seeing be made blind." By their attitude toward Him men passed sentence on themselves. If they did not welcome the light, they proved themselves blind (cf. iii. 19). This touched

the pride of the Pharisees. "Are we too blind?" they interposed—we, the teachers of Israel? And He retorted with a stinging sentence. "Had ye been blind, ye had not had sin. As it is, ye say 'We see': your sin remaineth." Well for them had they been ignorant as the despised multitude, since they would then have been excusable. They knew better, and that was their condemnation.

And then He spoke a parable or, as the word in the original here properly signifies (cf. ver. 6 R.V. marg.), "a proverb" or "byword." Why is it that here and elsewhere (cf. xvi. 25, 29) St. John has preferred this term to the familiar designation which alone the earlier Evangelists employ? The ancient prophets, like other Oriental teachers, delighted in apologues; and these were styled in Hebrew "similitudes." But what could the Greek translators make of the word where it occurs in the Old Testament Scriptures? The nearest thing in Greek to the Oriental "similitude" was the *myth* or "fable"; but this word they could not use by reason of its alien associations. And so they rendered the Hebrew word literally by *parabolé*, "similitude" or "comparison." Jewish readers understood what it meant; but what could the Greek Christians of the Province of Asia have made of it? With them *parabolé* signified either merely "comparison" or, in the scientific sense which it still bears, a geometrical curve. It was therefore needful that St. John should find a word which they could understand; and what better could he employ than "proverb" in the large sense of a homely saying with a deep meaning beneath the surface?

The way of a shepherd with his sheep was of old very beautiful, appealing no less to the citizens of Jerusalem than to the folk of pastoral Galilee. For south of the Holy City stretched the wilderness of Judæa, those lone uplands where David had tended the flocks of his father Jesse and where the shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks by night when the angel appeared and told them the good tidings of the Saviour's birth. Thither the flocks were led out in the springtime and pastured all the long summer. The shepherds did not leave them there alone to stray in the wilds and perish amid the crags and torrents

or fall a prey to fierce beasts and robbers (cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35 ; Am. iii. 12 ; Mt. xviii. 12, 13 ; Lk. xv. 3-6). They stayed to tend and guard the gentle and defenceless creatures, guiding them by day "in green pastures and beside the still waters" and folding them at eventide. The fold was a common shelter where the several flocks were gathered promiscuously ; and in the morning each shepherd led his own flock forth again to pasture. And how did he separate it from the throng ? Out on the lonely wild his sheep were his sole companions, and there grew up between him and them a kindly relationship. He was their protector, and they learned to trust him and endeared themselves to him. He had a name for each, and they knew his voice and would answer to his call. And thus it was easy for him to claim his own. He would stand at the door of the fold and call them by name, and they would gather to him and troop forth after him to the pasture. In the Idylls of Theocritus of Syracuse there are charming pictures of the ways of the shepherds and their sheep among the hills of Sicily. The shepherd's cry to his sheep was *sitta*, "hie on !" and the poet quotes some of the names which they commonly bore—kindly, playful names generally borrowed from some peculiarity of the creature : "Hie on, Whitey ! Hie on, Wavey !" And as it was on the Sicilian mountains, so was it in the wilderness of Judæa. Witness the prophet's story of the poor man and his little ewe lamb, "which he had bought and nourished up : and it grew up together with him, and with his children : it did eat of his own morsel, and drank of his own cup and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter."

The parable was lost upon our Lord's hearers, even the Rabbis among them, though surely they might have caught something of its meaning. For it had its interpretation in their Scriptures, where not only is God styled "the Shepherd of Israel," but His ministers are styled shepherds too, tending the flocks which He had committed to their care (cf. Num. xxvii. 16, 17 ; Ezk. xxxiv ; Zech. xi. 3-17, xiii. 7). And this is the *motif* of the parable. It is a rebuke of those false shepherds who by the heartless severity of their judicial procedure had proved their unfitness for their gracious office. And since they did not or

would not understand it, He after His wont (cf. Mk. iv. 34) expounded it to them.

"I am the door of the sheep," He begins; and His meaning here is illustrated by that other word of His to the Eleven in the Upper Room (xiv. 6): "I am the way: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Even as He was the way, the only way unto the Father whom He revealed, so was He the door into the Fold, the Father's home, the door which is ever opened wide for weary wanderers; and had they been true shepherds, they would not have been wroth with that poor sheep for no other reason than that he had found the door and entered by it. Thereby they had proved themselves no shepherds but thieves and brigands (cf. Lk. x. 30). For a shepherd enters by the door into the fold, and a thief "climbeth up some other way." "All," He says, "that came (omit "ever") before Me are thieves and brigands." What does this mean? Had not the prophets of old been true shepherds after their measure? Yes, but what made them so? Was it not that they had believed the Promise and hoped in the Coming Saviour? And therefore were they shepherds entering by the Door and no thieves climbing up some other way of their own invention. Christ is the only door; and His way has ever been and will ever be the only way into the Fold.

Thus, expounding His parable, our Lord interprets the Fold; and now He interprets the Shepherd. "I am the Good" or rather "the True Shepherd"; for so signifies the word in the original. It was a banker's term, denoting genuine as distinguished from counterfeit coin. "Prove everything," says St. Paul (1 Th. v. 21, 22), inculcating the duty of testing doctrines; "retain the genuine." So our Lord was the True Shepherd; and the evidence was that He loved His sheep and devoted Himself to their welfare. Here is the test. One who breaks into the fold to prey upon the sheep is no shepherd but a thief or a wolf; and one who forsakes them when they are assailed and flees for his life is a base hireling. The sheep belong to the shepherd; they are his own, and they are precious and dear to him. "He calleth them *by name*." Observe that phrase. In all the New Testament it occurs only here and in

one other passage—at the close of St. John's third epistle where, writing to that good pastor Gaius, he bids him greet the congregation on his behalf, conveying to each his sympathetic remembrance. "Greet the friends," he says, "*by name*," sure that Gaius knew them all and would convey the right greeting to each. And here is the constant mark of a true pastor : he has a personal interest in every sheep of his flock, knowing them all by name and bearing each on his heart. The phrase is movingly illustrated by a rudely written prayer among the recently discovered Egyptian papyri, where some old man in the fifth century intercedes for his household, his children and his children's children and their servants. "O Lord, my God and my Hope," he prays, "look upon Thecla and her children," and so on through the whole list. And then he concludes : "Look upon them by name." See what he means. He himself knew them all by name, and his desire was that the Lord also should know them by name and have a personal interest in each.

Ruskin has taught us that the ultimate test of devotion is that a man be willing, on due occasion, to die for his profession, whatever it may be, like a soldier on the battlefield or a martyr at the stake. Among the treasures of the Paris School of Fine Arts is a bronze Mercury by Briantz, the sculptor's last work ; and the story is that he was miserably poor and worked during a hard winter in a cheerless garret. One bitter night, when he had just completed the model, fear seized him lest the damp clay might freeze and crack ; and, hoarding his scanty fuel against working hours, he stripped himself and wrapped his clothing about the precious model. Next morning it was found unharmed and the sculptor on his bare couch frozen dead. He had given his life for his work.

And even so, says our Lord, "the true shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." And this supreme sacrifice He was soon to make. The rage of His enemies who were going about to kill Him and had already attempted to stone Him, was a premonition thereof ; and He would meet it without shrinking, since it was His Father's will, and at His Father's commandment He would freely lay down His life for His sheep, "that they might have life, and might have it more abundantly." For His sheep were

not merely "the little flock" (Lk. xii. 32) which He had already won. Nor were they the folk of Jerusalem and Galilee alone; for like John Wesley He had the world for His parish. The House of Israel was not for Him the only fold. He had sheep in every land—the myriads of heathendom, lost sheep which had never heard the Shepherd's voice. These too He had come to seek and save. "Them also I must bring; and there shall come to be"—not "one fold" but—"one flock, one Shepherd—one flock, one Flockmaster."

DEPARTURE FROM JERUSALEM

X. 19-42

19 *There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.*

20 *And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad ; why hear ye him ?*

21 *Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind ?*

22 *And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.*

23 *And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.*

24 *Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou *make us to doubt ? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.*

25 *Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not : the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.*

26 *But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.*

27 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me :*

28 *And I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

29 *My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all ; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.*

30 *I and my Father are one.*

31 *Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.*

32 *Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father ; for which of those works do ye stone me ?*

33 *The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not ; but for blasphemy ; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.*

* Or, hold us in suspense ?

34 *Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods ?*

35 *If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken ;*

36 *Say ye of him, whom the Father have sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest ; because I said, I am the Son of God ?*

37 *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.*

38 *But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works : that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.*

39 *Therefore they sought again to take him : but he escaped out of their hand,*

40 *And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized ; and there he abode.*

41 *And many resorted unto him and said, John did no miracle : but all things that John spake of this man were true.*

42 *And many believed on him there.*

IN His discourse on the True Shepherd our Lord had especially in view "the Jews," those Rabbis who had dealt in so unshepherdly a fashion with the man whom He had healed ; and so the Evangelist, taking no account of the multitude, proceeds to tell how they were affected by it. They withdrew and evidently, since the conference was largely attended (cf. ver. 20), took counsel with their colleagues, the leaders of the Pharisaic party in the city. In that party there were many who were well disposed to our Lord ; and since opinion was again divided (cf. ix. 16), it was resolved to interview Him and elicit from Him a definite statement of His claims. They soon found the opportunity which they desired. It was now the season of the Feast of Dedication, which commemorated the purification of the Temple in the year 165 B.C. after its pollution by Antiochus Epiphanes. It was celebrated annually in the last week of December, and by reason alike of its lesser importance and of the difficulty of travel in midwinter it brought no throng of pilgrims to Jerusalem. There was no eager crowd in

the Temple-court, and they found our Lord pacing in solitary meditation in Solomon's Porch or Cloister (cf. Ac. iii. 11, v. 12), so called because it was the only portion of Solomon's Temple which had escaped destruction when the city was taken by the Assyrians. Perceiving their opportunity they "came round about Him"—"encircled Him" or "ringed Him round"—and put their question: "How long dost thou keep us in suspense? If thou art the Messiah, tell us in plain words."

Observe the reason of the question. John the Baptist had proclaimed Him the Messiah, and at the outset of His ministry He had corroborated His forerunner's testimony, notably by His public demonstration of His Messianic authority at the first Passover when He drove the traffickers from the Temple-court (cf. ii. 13-17). But He had quickly experienced the embarrassment which resulted thence by reason of the contemporary conception of the Messiah as a national deliverer (cf. ii. 23) and which culminated in the wild attempt of the Galilean enthusiasts to acclaim Him king (cf. vi. 15); and He had more and more refrained from asserting a claim which was so perilously misconstrued, and had rather wrought "the works of the Messiah," leaving these to produce their own impression and setting forth the truth of His Messiahship, especially by disclosing, as opportunity arose, the actual issue—not a throne in Jerusalem but His redeeming Passion. Hence the bewilderment of those Pharisees, confronted on the one hand by the evidence of His works and on the other by His repudiation of the Messianic rôle which the popular enthusiasm would have thrust upon Him. "If thou art the Messiah, tell us in plain words."

Reasonable as it seemed, their question was their condemnation. They were asking for what He had already given them without avail when at the outset of His ministry He had openly asserted His Messiahship. "I told you, and ye do not believe." Neither had they accepted the continuous testimony of His works. And the reason of their unbelief was, as He had told them the other day, that they were not of His sheep; else they would have hearkened to their Shepherd's voice and followed Him. And then their questionings would have been answered

by a blessed experience. "I give My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them (the same word as in ver. 12 : "the wolf *catcheth* them ") out of My hand."

They had craved a definite pronouncement on the question of His Messiahship, and He advances an infinitely larger claim than Messiahship as they construed it. What was the reason of the eternal security of His sheep? It was that they were not merely His but God's. They were His because God had given them to Him as the wage of the work which He had done in God's name. "My Father who hath given them unto Me is greater than all," or, according to another and perhaps better attested reading, "What My Father hath given unto Me is greater than all"—stronger than all enemies though but "a little flock." "And," He proceeds with equal cogency whichever reading be preferred, "none can snatch them out of the Father's hand." Here lay the security of "the sheep of His hand"—that they were "the sheep of God's hand" (cf. Ps. xcvi. 7) no less. And this is His high claim. It was all one to say "no one shall snatch them out of My hand" and "none can snatch them out of the Father's hand." For "I and the Father are one"—not "one person" but "one thing," He was the Eternal Son Incarnate, the Visible Image of the Invisible God; and to see Him was to see the Father (cf. xiv. 9). His human hands were the outstretched hands of God.

It was stark blasphemy in their ears, and it enkindled their fury. They "took up stones again to stone Him." Observe here another of those touches so frequent in our Gospel which reveal the hand of an eye-witness and surely attest its historicity. Though the distinction is ignored by our Version which has in both cases "*took up* stones," they are different words which the Evangelist employs here and in his narrative of the previous attempt upon our Lord's life (cf. viii. 59). In the former instance the word signifies merely "lifted," "picked up," indicating as we have seen, that the scene was an unfinished portion of the Temple. Here the scene was Solomon's Cloister where there was no litter of masonry, and the word is "carried" or "fetched" (the word rendered "bear," for example, in xix. 17, xx. 15; Lk. vii. 14), indicating that they rushed off and gathered

stones and brought them back in their hands. The brief delay sufficed to allay their fury. Recognising the consequences of a deed of violence, they hesitated to seize Him and drag Him away to death ; and He calmly faced them and remonstrated with them. " Many good works have I showed you from the Father." So they had admitted (cf. iii. 2). " For which work of them are ye for stoning Me? " " It is not," they retorted, " on the score of a good work that we are for stoning thee, but on the score of blasphemy—because thou, being a man, makest thyself God." To reason with them on His high claim would have been wasted breath ; and with that ready wit which He constantly displayed in dealing with His Rabbinical assailants, He posed them with a theological puzzle. Of old when Israel was a theocracy her law was accounted an ordinance of God, and in the ancient Scriptures the judges who interpreted and pronounced it were designated " gods " (cf. Ex. xxi. 6, xxii. 8, 28 ; Ps. lviii. 1 R.V. marg.). Thus it is written (Ps. lxxxii. 6) " Ye are gods," where the Psalmist is reproving unrighteous judges. " If," argues our Lord, turning their own weapons against them, " the Scriptures which ye so revere, call even unrighteous judges ' gods,' how is it blasphemy that I whom ye acknowledge as ' a teacher come from God,' should call Myself ' the Son of God ' ? " Observe how skilfully He here enlarges the argument. He had not called Himself " the Son of God " : He had called God " His Father " ; and by employing the alternative and synonymous phrase He reinforces His reasoning by reminding them that they called the Messiah " the Son of God " though they did not recognise Him as divine but merely as a divinely commissioned deliverer. Thus, since He did, as they allowed, " the works of the Father," He was surely justified in calling God His Father. Even on their own estimate of Him it was no blasphemy. And, He adds, if they believed His works, they would come to believe Him. " If I am doing the works of the Father, though ye believe not Me, believe the works, that ye may be sure and ever surer that the Father is in Me and I in the Father." At this, a reiteration of His blasphemy as they deemed it, their anger blazed up afresh, and they made to arrest Him ; but He eluded their grasp.

Herewith ended His ministry at Jerusalem. He had made His last appeal to the obdurate city, and He quitted her to return no more till He came thither to die. As He had done at a season of like though lesser discouragement at the beginning of His ministry (cf. iii. 22), He betook Himself to Bethabara beyond Jordan, the scene of the Baptist's great ministry (cf. i. 28) and His own manifestation as the Promised Saviour. It was with a sad heart that He climbed the slope of Mount Olivet and crossed the summit on His way thither ; and here probably is the proper position of two precious passages which St. Matthew and St. Luke have diversely interwoven with their narratives (cf. Introduction, p. xxxiii). (1) His lament over the city which He loved so well and had so vainly sought to win (cf. Mt. xxiii. 37-39 ; Lk. xiii. 34, 35) : " Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a bird gathereth her brood under her wings ! and ye would not." (2) His thanksgiving for the success which amid so much failure He had achieved (cf. Mt. xi. 25-27 ; Lk. x. 21, 22).

" There," says the Evangelist, " He abode," indicating a considerable sojourn—some two months, as the sequel suggests. Nor was the time idly or unprofitably spent. As in those memorable days three years ago when the Baptist was preaching there, the people of Jerusalem and its environs flocked to Bethabara ; and they confessed that this was a more wonderful ministry by far, amply fulfilling the testimony which the Baptist had borne to Him. Of the stirring and fruitful season thus briefly chronicled by our Evangelist his predecessors have recorded several incidents (cf. Mt. xix-xx. 16 ; Mk. x. 1-31 ; Lk. xviii. 15-30).

THE DEATH OF LAZARUS

xi. 1-16

1 Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

2 (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

4 When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judæa again.

8 His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee ; and goest thou thither again ?

9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day ? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

11 These things said he : and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth ; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death : but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

15 *And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe ; nevertheless let us go unto him.*

16 *Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.*

HERE Lazarus and his sisters appear for the first time in St. John's narrative, and the manner of their introduction is very significant. Lazarus is never mentioned by the earlier Evangelists, and so he is introduced here as a stranger—"a certain man, Lazarus of Bethany" (omit "named"). But his sisters were no strangers; for though this is their first appearance on St. John's pages, St. Luke has already introduced them by telling (cf. x. 38-42) how at "a certain village," evidently on His way to the Feast of Tabernacles, "a certain woman named Martha" entertained our Lord and her sister Mary sat at His feet and heard His word. And so, assuming after his wont his readers' familiarity with the narratives of his predecessors, St. John introduces Lazarus as their brother residing with them in that village. "And," he continues (not in a parenthesis as our Version has it), further defining him, "Mary was she who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped His feet with her hair." It is indeed possible that this is an anticipatory reference to her subsequent anointing of His feet at Bethany on His way to the Passover (cf. xii. 1-3), but more probably it is another reference to St. Luke's narrative, expressly identifying her with that sinful woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee, who was none other than Mary the Magdalene (cf. Lk. vii. 36-50, where see exposition). And observe a further suggestion, obliterated in our Version, which has "Lazarus of Bethany, the town" or rather "village of Mary and her sister Martha," as though "the village" were in explanatory apposition to "Bethany." The original is literally "Lazarus from Bethany, of the village of Mary and Martha" (cf. i. 44, where see exposition). And what may this signify? As we have seen (see exposition of Mt. xxi. 17-22), Bethany was the designation not merely of that ever sacred village on the crest of Olivet but of the district covering the mountain's western slope and comprehending

several villages, not only Bethany but Bethphage and other hamlets where dwelt the husbandmen who cultivated the orchards of palm-trees and olives. And so Lazarus is here doubly defined. He dwelt with his sisters in the village of Bethany, and he had a holding in the district of Bethany. He was probably a husbandman, and evidently from the deference which the rulers showed them (cf. ver. 19), they were prosperous and reputable people.

His regard for them (cf. ver. 5) proves that, despite the Evangelist's silence thereanent, our Lord had already been brought into a peculiar intimacy with them. Lazarus was His "dear friend"; and when he sickened, the thoughts of Martha and Mary turned to the Master down at Bethabara, and they sent a message to Him there: "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick," or rather "he who is so dear to Thee"; for it is not here the colder word denoting mere regard or esteem (see exposition of Mt. v. 44). They made no request, but they plainly expected His intervention. And it was a reasonable expectation. For Bethabara was within twenty miles' distance from Bethany; and though He might not venture thither and put Himself in the grasp of the rulers, surely He might answer their prayer as He had answered the nobleman's at Cana (cf. iv. 50-53) by sending forth His word and healing their brother. But they waited, and still no answer was vouchsafed. He let Lazarus die. It was not that He did not care; for what says the Evangelist? "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Therefore"—just because He loved them—"when He heard that he was sick, He then abode in the place where He was for two days." And it is ever thus with "unanswered prayer." The answer tarries, but it tarries in love for the accomplishment of a gracious purpose.

And what was the purpose which our Lord now had in view? He indicated it in the assurance which He gave the messenger who brought the tidings to carry back to Bethany: "This sickness is not to end in death but to serve the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Driven out of Jerusalem, He still yearned over the obdurate city. He

would fain win her yet, and in the sickness of Lazarus He perceived an opportunity for demonstrating His claims and persuading her people by a transcendent miracle which would "glorify the Son of God," that is, the Messiah (see exposition of Mt. iii. 17), not merely attesting Him the Promised Saviour but revealing His proper glory as more, far more than the national deliverer whom they were dreaming of. When they heard it, His disciples took it simply as an assurance that Lazarus would recover, and they would think no more of it ; and it surprised them when, after the two days had passed, He said : " Let us go into Judæa again." At Bethabara on the further side of the Jordan they were in Peræa, the territory of Herod Antipas ; and should they cross over into Judæa, they would be within the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin and liable to arrest. What occasion was there for occurring so grave a risk ? He gently rebuked their fears. The Father's will was His only law ; and even as He would never impatiently forestall it but ever waited till " His time, His hour had come " (cf. ii. 4, vii. 6, 30, viii. 20), so neither would He lag behind it but ever, when His hour had come, would hasten on His appointed way, eager to do His Father's will and sure that nothing could harm Him until His task was accomplished. " Are there not," said He, " twelve hours in the day ? " And what then ? Even as He had said already (ix. 4) " We must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day : the night cometh when none can work," so now He says : " If one walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world ; but if one walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him."

And then He told them what His errand was. " Lazarus, our dear friend, hath fallen asleep ; but I am going to awake him." " Sleep " was an ancient and always beautiful figure of death. " In peace be thy sleep " was a common inscription on Jewish tombs in our Lord's day. But He invested it with a fresh significance by His reaffirmation of the hope of immortality and His revelation of a glorious resurrection ; and the disciples should have caught His meaning. But, remembering His assurance that the sickness of Lazarus would not end in death, they took it literally. " Lord," they urged, " if he hath fallen

asleep, he will get well." What need then for venturing back to Judæa? He was grieved less by their dullness than by their selfishness; and He told them "in plain words" (cf. x. 24) that Lazarus—"our (not "My") dear friend" as He had styled him, thinking thus to engage their sympathy—was dead. "And," He added gently reproachful, "for your sakes, that ye may believe, I am glad that I was not there. But let us go unto him." They would have held back and let Him go alone had not one brave voice spoken out and put them to shame. And the marvel is that here it was not Peter who spoke—"Peter, the mouth of the Apostles, the ever ardent, the leader of the choir." It was Thomas. Ever despondent, he yet was no coward, and withal he was true to the Master. Sure that to venture back to Judæa was certain death for Him and for them all, he would not let Him go alone. "Let us also go," he cried, "that we may die with Him."

HIS RESURRECTION

xi. 17-44

17 *Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.*

18 *Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, *about fifteen furlongs off :*

19 *And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.*

20 *Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him : but Mary sat still in the house.*

21 *Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died.*

22 *But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.*

23 *Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.*

24 *Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.*

25 *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live :*

26 *And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this ?*

27 *She saith unto him, Yea, Lord : I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.*

28 *And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.*

29 *As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.*

30 *Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.*

* That is, about two miles.

31 *The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.*

32 *Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.*

33 *When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and *was troubled,*

34 *And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.*

35 *Jesus wept.*

36 *Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!*

37 *And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?*

38 *Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.*

39 *Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.*

40 *Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?*

41 *Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.*

42 *And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.*

43 *And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.*

44 *And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.*

* Gr. he troubled himself.

EVIDENTLY Lazarus had died on the same day when word of his mortal sickness was sent to Bethabara. Two days elapsed, and our Lord and the Twelve, setting out next morning, would reach Bethany toward evening ; and thus, since in that sultry climate the dead were buried immediately (cf. Ac. v. 6, 10), he had, according to the inclusive reckoning of the ancients, lain four days in his sepulchre, a rockhewn cavern. By reason of the haste in burial it sometimes happened that a swoon was mistaken for death ; and hence had arisen the idea that for three days the soul, loath to forsake its tenement of clay, hovered round it, and for that space the mourners kept watch by the resting-place of their dead, and only when decay began, did they abandon hope of their reanimation. The three days had passed when our Lord arrived at Bethany ; and the sisters were no longer keeping watch by the sepulchre but sitting in their desolate home, and with them a number of " the Jews " (cf. i. 19), Rabbis who had come out the fifteen furlongs—nearly two miles—from Jerusalem to condole with them.

Our Lord and His company were descried making their way up the steep road, " the Ascent of Blood " (cf. Lk. x. 30), toward the village ; and tidings of their approach was brought to the sisters. Martha, the mistress of the house, answered the door, and, knowing well His relations with the rulers, she hastened out to meet Him and, encountering Him outside the village (cf. ver. 30), greeted Him with the plaint which had been constantly on her lips and her sister's all those sad days : " Lord, hadst Thou been here, my brother had not died." It was a gentle reproach ; yet despite His seeming neglect and the seeming falsification of His assurance that the sickness would not end in death, she retained her trust in Him. " Even now," she added, as though apologising for the reproach, " I know that whatsoever Thou mayest ask of God, God will grant Thee." He told her that her brother would rise again, but this was small comfort to her ; for she took it as a reference to the final resurrection of the dead—the sort of trite consolation which she had been hearing from the Rabbis,

And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

And what then? "I," said He, "am the Resurrection and the Life"; and this made a blessed difference. There is no efficacy in a mere doctrine; but see behind it the Living Saviour, and it is radiant with hope and peace. There was no comfort for Martha in the thought of the Resurrection at the Last Day: it was too remote. But the dear Master was very near, and where He was, all was well. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me." "Yea, Lord," she cried, "I have believed that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, He that cometh into the world (cf. i. 15, 27, iii. 31, vi. 14; Mt. xi. 3)." These were designations of the Promised Saviour, and she thus piled one upon another to express the fullness of her faith.

The Lord had missed Mary, and Martha had explained why she had come alone. His enemies were in the house, and she had stolen away on learning of His approach, lest they should molest Him if He appeared in their midst. She left Him there outside the village and, hastening home, whispered the news to her sister. At once Mary started up and hurried away. Martha's intention was to stay with the visitors and keep them employed; but when Mary withdrew so hastily, they fancied she had gone to weep by the sepulchre and followed her to continue their offices of consolation, and Martha went with them, solicitous for the Master's safety.

When Mary reached Him, she fell at His feet—the dear feet which once, a poor sinner, she had anointed and kissed in the house of Simon the Pharisee. "Lord," she cried like her sister (cf. ver. 21), "hadst Thou been here, my brother had not died." The Rabbis were standing by and, though surprised at seeing Him there, they continued their lamentation after the oriental fashion (cf. Mk. v. 38). Their show of sorrow accorded ill with the enmity toward Him which filled their hearts and gleamed in their eyes, and His indignation was stirred. But He restrained it. "He"—not "groaned in the spirit and was troubled" but—"checked His spirit and troubled Himself." So the Evangelist describes the scene in the graphic language of an eye-witness, meaning that His effort at self-restraint appeared in the quivering of His lips and the nervous clutching of His hands. "Where

have ye laid him?" He asked the sisters. "Lord," they answered, "come and see." Had it been the common burial-place outside the village, He need not have asked; and probably it was, like Joseph of Arimathæa's (cf. Mt xxvii. 60), a private sepulchre which Lazarus had constructed on his own ground. As He followed them thither, His indignation gave place to sorrow, and "Jesus wept" or rather "shed tears"—another word in the original than that which the Evangelist has just used (ver. 33) of the "weeping," the loud lamentation, of Mary and the Rabbis. Tears filled His eyes and trickled down His face. Why should He thus have wept? It was not for the death of His friend whom He would presently recall to life, nor for the sorrow of his sisters whom He would presently make so glad. It is an old question, and it was answered by that devout scholar of the fifth century, St. Isidore of Pelusium, who from his hermitage on the Delta of the Nile exercised a far-reaching ministry by his letters to correspondents near and far on troublous problems of faith and conduct (cf. p. 362). One of these deals with this question "why the Lord wept over Lazarus." It was not, he explains, that Lazarus was dead but rather that He must bring him back to a world of sorrow, recalling to the rough billows the mariner who had gained the peaceful haven.

Who would wish back the saints upon our rough
Wearisome road?
Wish back a breathless soul
Just at the goal?
My soul, praise God
For all dear souls which have enough.

Therefore it was that "Jesus wept."

It is worth observing by the way that this is the shortest verse in our English Bible, but in the Greek original there is a shorter, shorter by two letters—the Apostle's admonition (1 Th. v. 16) "Rejoice evermore." And there is profit in their correlation, incidental though it be. It is because Jesus wept that it is possible for us to rejoice evermore. His sorrow is our joy, His pain our peace.

The Rabbis marked His emotion, and some of them were touched. "See," said they, "how dear he was to him!" But

their companions sneered. Here was the fellow whose supposed miracle of opening the blind man's eyes had made such a stir in the city—here he was shedding impotent tears! "Could he not have prevented this man also from dying?" The heartless gibe vexed Jesus, but He took no notice. "Again checking His emotion, He cometh to the sepulchre." It was no longer open; for the three days were past. "Take away the stone" said the Master; and when Martha protested against the exposure of the noisome clay, He answered: "Did I not tell thee that if thou believe, thou shalt see the glory of God?" It was the assurance which He had sent the sisters from Bethabara (cf. ver. 4) and which, as it seemed, their brother's death had falsified. There was no lack of ready hands to do His bidding, since a crowd of sympathetic neighbours had escorted the sisters; and when the stone was rolled away, He stood at the entrance and lifted up His eyes and His voice to Heaven in prayer. He was wont to pray ere addressing Himself to a task; for in the days of His mortal weakness it was not by His own but by His Father's power that He wrought His mighty works, and He always besought His Father's co-operation. But He does not seek this now. He was already assured of it, and His prayer was no entreaty but a thanksgiving therefor, an open declaration of His divine commission. "Father, I thank Thee that Thou didst hear Me. I knew that Thou always hearest Me; but for the sake of the multitude that standeth round I spake, that they may believe that it was Thou that didst commission Me." And then He—not merely "cried" but—"shouted with a great voice"—a cry of exultation (cf. Lk. i. 42), a shout of triumph (cf. Jo. xii. 13), which reached to the farthest limit of the crowd: "Lazarus, come forth." It is written that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul"; and even so the breath of the Creator now quickened the lifeless clay. And who will doubt it that believes the promise of the resurrection at the last day, when "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality"?

Our Lord's miracles were recreations, and Lazarus came

forth from the sepulchre in full vigour with no trace of the wasting of his mortal sickness. So we learn from the command "Loose him, and let him go." When his limbs were unswathed, he walked to his home whence he had been carried to his burial. It was evening, and surely the Master would go thither with him and pass the night beneath that dear roof. What would their converse be ere they went to rest? The question has often been asked, and the marvel is that it is unanswered by the Evangelist.

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house return'd,
Was this demanded—if he yearn'd
To hear her weeping by his grave?

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?"
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

And what is the reason of the silence? This much is certain—that it is an attestation of the event. For had the story been a fable, it would certainly have followed him into the Unseen and gratified our hungry curiosity by tidings thereof. In early days some Christian teachers, like Origen of Alexandria, built upon the Evangelist's silence a theory which went by the poetical name of "the Soul's Nightlong Sleep." Lazarus, they held, told nothing because he had nothing to tell, forasmuch as the souls of believers, though at death they immediately pass into glory, do not enter into conscious enjoyment thereof. They fall asleep and rest with God, safe in His keeping, until the Resurrection when, reunited with their glorified bodies, they awake to eternal felicity. The interval may be very long, extending to unnumbered ages; but it will be passed in undisturbed repose, and when they awake, it will seem but a moment since they closed their eyes on this mortal scene.

Though long the night may seem,
We shall sleep without a dream
Till we waken on yon bright Sabbath morning.

The theory was condemned by several of the mediæval Councils as incompatible with the fiction of Purgatory, but it reasserted

itself at the Reformation. Calvin rejected it, but it was approved by Luther. "Our good Prince," he remarked on hearing of the sudden death of the Elector of Saxony at the close of a hunting excursion, "expired like an infant, without trouble or fear, and when he awakes at the Last Day, he will imagine that he has just come home from the forest." And it has commended itself to others in more recent times, like Francis Gaussen, Professor at Geneva, and in a measure the saintly Thomas Erskine of Linlathen.

The theory has indeed a certain charm, yet there are passages, especially in the Gospels, which plainly discountenance it, particularly the story of the appearance of Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. xvii. 1-8), the parable of the Rich Man and the Beggar Lazarus (Lk. xvi. 19-31), and our Lord's promise to the Dying Thief (Lk. xxiii. 43) "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Nor perhaps shall we miss its precarious elucidation of the story of Lazarus if we duly consider the revelation of the Incarnation of our Lord and His manifestations to His disciples after His Resurrection. When the Eternal Son of God assumed our mortal nature, He became truly man, sharing our sinless infirmities and limitations; and the glory which He had aforesaid with the Father was hidden from Him by the veil of the flesh (see exposition of Lk. ii. 39-52). And so it happened with His disciples when He manifested Himself to them after His Resurrection. His glorified humanity was invisible to the eye of sense, and they beheld Him forasmuch as the veil of sense was lifted for a space from their hearts; and when it closed again about them, the vision faded, and what they had seen was inexpressible by their mortal faculties and in terms of their mortal condition. Hence their reticence in recounting those ineffable experiences. And even so would it be with Lazarus.

OUR LORD'S RETREAT TO EPHRAIM

xi. 45-54

45 *Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.*

46 *But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.*

47 *Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we ? for this man doeth many miracles.*

48 *If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him : and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.*

49 *And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,*

50 *Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.*

51 *And this spake he not of himself : but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation ;*

52 *And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.*

53 *Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.*

54 *Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews ; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.*

IT was an amazing miracle ; and what was its result ? It won the faith of those Rabbis who had come out from Jerusalem to condole with the sisters, even those of them who so shortly before had sneered at our Lord. So the Evangelist expressly affirms according to the proper rendering of his words : “ Many therefore of the Jews (that is, the rulers) believed in Him—those who had come unto Mary and had beheld (cf. i. 14) the thing which He did.” Most naturally and

with no evil intention some of them on their return to the city that evening reported it to "the Pharisees," the leaders of their party; and next morning the Sanhedrin convened to consider the situation which had arisen. However the Pharisaic members may have felt, the miracle was incredible to their Sadducean colleagues, materialists as they were, disbelieving the immortality of the soul (cf. Ac. xxiii. 8), and they would scout it as either a natural occurrence—a case of recovery from swoon, or a deliberate imposture; nevertheless it had mightily stirred the populace, and they recognised the gravity of the situation. An outburst of Messianic enthusiasm seemed inevitable, and this would be sternly repressed by the imperial government. "If we let this fellow thus alone, the Romans will come and take away both our Place"—that is, the Temple, the Holy Place—"and our nation." Yet if they meddled with Him, they would incur the popular resentment. "What do we?" they asked each other helplessly. The President was Caiaphas, the acting High Priest (cf. exposition of Mt. xxi. 23), and he broke in with true Sadducean insolence (cf. viii. 21-30) and contempt for the common people. It was no time for paltering, said he, or for weighing the merits of the case. The one question was the safety of the nation; and, whether an impostor or no, Jesus must be put out of the way. "It is for your profit that one man die for the people and the whole nation perish not." In the light of future events it was a significant, a truly prophetic pronouncement, all the more impressive, observes the Evangelist, that it came from the lips of the man who "that year"—"that memorable, that fateful year"—held the sacred office of High Priest. All unwittingly Caiaphas proclaimed the Vicarious Sacrifice ordained of old not for Israel alone but for all mankind. His argument prevailed. The Sadducean party in the Sanhedrin needed no persuasion, and with the patriotic Pharisees the national interest was paramount; and "from that day forth they" not merely as hitherto (cf. v. 18, vii. 1, x. 39) "sought" but "took counsel to put Him to death." It was their settled policy; and is it not a tragic irony that by achieving it they defeated their prudential end and precipitated the disaster which they thought

to avert? For had the nation accepted our Lord as her Messiah, she would have been delivered from those wild insurrections which provoked Rome's terrible vengeance.

It would have been courting death for our Lord to "walk more among the Jews," the rulers who had thus determined. And whither should He betake Himself? Not only was Bethabara near Jerusalem but had He now returned thither, a larger and more enthusiastic multitude would have resorted to Him, exasperating the rulers. So He retired to Ephraim, a town in the north of Judæa, situated in the midst of rich wheatlands, whence "carrying straw to Ephraim" was proverbial like our "carrying coals to Newcastle." It was a secure retreat, since not only was Ephraim separated from Jerusalem, according to St. Jerome, by some twenty miles of rocky wilderness but it was close to Samaria and were He threatened with arrest, He might easily escape across the frontier.

THE PASSION-WEEK

xi. 55-xix

BANQUET AT BETHANY

xi. 55-xii. 11

55 *And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand : and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.*

56 *Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast ?*

57 *Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him.*

1 *Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.*

2 *There they made him a supper ; and Martha served : but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.*

3 *Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair : and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.*

4 *Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,*

5 *Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor ?*

6 *This he said, not that he cared for the poor ; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.*

7 *Then said Jesus, Let her alone : against the day of my burying hath she kept this.*

8 *For the poor always ye have with you ; but me ye have not always.*

9 *Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there : and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.*

10 *But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death ;*

11 *Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.*

IT was at the close of December, 28 A.D., that our Lord quitted Jerusalem and retreated to Bethabara, and in view of the largeness of His ministry there (cf. x. 40-42) it would probably be about the close of February when He returned to Bethany and raised Lazarus from the dead. Thence He retreated to Ephraim, and there He sojourned with His disciples until it was time for Him to betake Himself to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. The Supper fell that year (29 A.D.) on the evening of Thursday, April 16th, and the sacred week began with Sunday the 12th ; but ere it began the city was thronged by worshippers from afar who came thither betimes to purify themselves from ceremonial defilement contracted by the way (cf. 2 Chr. xxx. 17). The city was ringing with the fame of the miracle at Bethany, and the strangers were eager to see Jesus. He would naturally have appeared at the Feast, but the Sanhedrists or, as the Evangelist styles them in the accustomed phrase, " the Chief Priests (omit " both ") and the Pharisees " had published an order requiring that anyone who knew of His whereabouts should lodge information in order to His arrest ; and the question on every lip in that common resort, the Temple-court, was whether He would venture to the city.

The earlier Evangelists have recorded the incidents which occurred in the course of our Lord's journey from Ephraim to Jerusalem by the circuitous but easier route through the Plain of Jericho (cf. Mt. xx. 17-34 ; Mk. x. 32-52 ; Lk. xviii. 31-xix. 28) ; and St. John takes up the tale on His arrival at Bethany. Though St. Matthew and St. Mark have already told the story of the banquet there (cf. Mt. xxvi. 6-12 ; Mk. xiv. 3-9), he tells it anew in order to supplement their narratives. Observe his elucidations. (1) Because of the light which it sheds on his motive the earlier Evangelists connect the incident with the traitor's covenant with the rulers on the Wednesday, and St. John expressly assigns it to its actual position " six days before

the Passover (the Paschal Supper on the Thursday evening)," that is, according to the inclusive reckoning of the ancients, on the Sunday evening. (2) It was a public banquet in our Lord's honour, demonstrating in defiance of the Sanhedrin's edict the devotion of the people of Bethany on this His first appearance in their midst after the miracle. So St. John indicates when he writes: "He came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Therefore they made Him a supper there," just as Levi the publican after his call "made Him a great reception in his house" (cf. Lk. v. 29). (3) While the others with their studious reticence regarding those dear friends of the Master make no mention of Lazarus and his sisters, St. John, writing when they had passed beyond reproach, tells how they all were present and each bore a part. Lazarus was there, not as the host, since the scene was the house of Simon the Leper, but as a guest, since the banquet was made in his honour as well as the Lord's; Martha, that good housewife, was there in charge of the table; and Mary was the woman, unnamed by the others, who stole uninvited into the chamber and paid her tribute to Him. (4) The others represent her as simply doing Him the honour customarily paid to a distinguished guest by pouring her fragrant ointment on His *head*; but St. John, in the very language which St. Luke had employed in his story of the feast in the house of Simon the Pharisee (cf. vii. 38), tells that she anointed His *feet* and wiped them with her hair, her loose tresses which were the badge of a harlot. And thus he plainly identifies her with that sinful woman and shows the reason of her present action. It was a re-enactment of that former scene, assuring the Lord that His mercy lived in her grateful remembrance and openly confessing that the raising of Lazarus from the dead was not the only debt which her home owed Him. (5) St. John tells that it was Judas who gave voice to the disapproval of her lavish expenditure, and why it was that it displeased him; "he was a thief and, having the coffer (as treasurer), he used to pilfer the contributions." And observe how epigrammatic is his report of that sentence of our Lord's reply: "Let her alone! For the day of My embalming hath she hoarded it." Though Mary never dreamed of the impending

tragedy, He saw in her anointing an anticipation of the embalming of His mangled body six days thence (cf. xix. 40) ; and surely it was worth her while to hoard the three hundred *denarii* for a use so sacred. This, the reading supported by the early Syriac Version, is most probably authentic, but other authorities, including the two oldest manuscripts, have : " Let her preserve it for the day of My embalming," meaning apparently that instead of taking the ointment from her and selling it for the poor they should let her keep it for that higher use.

Tidings of our Lord's arrival at Bethany reached Jerusalem, and " much people " or rather " the great multitude "—the phrase elsewhere translated (Mk. xii. 38) " the common people "—" of the Jews " streamed out thither in the hope of seeing Him and the man whom He had raised from the dead. Exasperated by so flagrant a defiance of their edict the Chief Priests resolved that Lazarus also should be put to death. It is significant that the Pharisees had no part in the sanguinary resolution. Unlike their Sadducean colleagues, who " said that there was no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit," they recognised the possibility of the miracle and dreaded incurring the guilt of sacrilege.

This is the last appearance of Lazarus and Martha. Their sister Mary, if indeed she were none other than the Magdalene, figures largely and nobly in the story of our Lord's Passion, standing by His cross, helping to lay Him in His sepulchre, and returning thither on the morning of the first day of the week to behold Him risen from the dead ; but where were they then ? It is a reasonable inference from the Evangelist's bare mention of the Chief Priests' resolution to put him to death that Lazarus fled. It was no cowardly desertion. The Master would counsel it, since the testimony of " a man raised up by Christ " was too precious to be lightly thrown away. And evidently, while Mary remained, Martha accompanied her brother. Is it not a corroboration of the inference that next morning but one, " as He was returning to the city " after spending the night on Mount Olivet, our Lord " hungered " (cf. Mt. xxi. 17, 18 ; Mk. xi. 11, 12) ? Surely had she been there, Martha would have entertained Him in her house hard by, and He would not have gone breakfastless.

And whither did they flee? In the entire defect of evidence it may not be amiss to mention a pleasing fancy. St. John's second epistle, which he wrote shortly after his settlement about the year 70 at Ephesus, is addressed according to our English Versions to "the elect lady and her children." Many interpreters, both ancient and modern, have taken this as a figurative designation of a church and its members; but more probably the epistle is a personal letter, and the word rendered "lady"—*Kuria*, the Latin *Domina*—is here, as it often was, a proper name. And so the letter is addressed to a friend of the Apostle and her family—"elect Kuria and her children." It was the fashion in those days for a Jew to have two names—a Jewish name which he bore among his own people, and a Gentile name which he bore in his intercourse with Gentiles; and the Gentile name was commonly the Greek or Latin rendering of the Jewish. Thus Dorcas ("Gazelle") is the Greek of the Hebrew Tabitha. It so happens that Martha means "Mistress" and Kuria is its Greek equivalent; and the suggestion is that St. John's correspondent may have been the sister of Lazarus. The situation would then be that on their flight from Bethany they migrated to the Province of Asia, and there, living among Greeks, she naturally went by her Greek name. She had married, and while she remained with the rest of her family at her home in another town of the Province, several of her sons had settled in the capital and had given a good account of themselves there. They were devoted Christians, and on his coming to Ephesus the Apostle recognised them and wrote this glad letter of congratulation to his old friend. Whatever it may be worth, it is a pleasant fancy. It is indeed a large web to be woven of so fine a thread, "a great muckle bird to be cleckit out o' sic a wee egg"; but assuredly there is some such human background to that little letter. And many an imposing critical theory has been built on a less substantial basis.

HIS ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

xii. 12-19

12 *On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,*

13 *Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna : Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

14 *And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon ; as it is written,*

15 *Fear not, daughter of Sion : behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.*

16 *These things understood not his disciples at the first : but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.*

17 *The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.*

18 *For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.*

19 *The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing ? behold, the world is gone after him.*

CF. Mt. xxi. 1-11 ; Mk. xi. 1-11 ; Lk. xix. 29-44, where see exposition. St. John's is the shortest of the four accounts, and he wrote it not to tell over again a story already so fully told but to add several precious elucidations. (1) He explains whence came the crowd that escorted our Lord into the city. They were not the folk of Bethany but the worshippers who had come up to the Feast and who, as they had done the previous evening, flocked out betimes in the morning to see Him. (2) He not only proves himself an eye-witness but betrays his intimacy with the locality when he tells that they "took" not "branches of palm-trees" but "the branches of

the palm-trees"—those trees which he knew so well, clothing the slope of Olivet and giving the village its name of Bethany "the House of Dates." (3) The ass, so prized in the East, was a despised creature among the Greeks and Romans; and therefore St. Mark, the Roman Evangelist, and St. Luke, the Greek, call the beast which carried our Lord "a colt," after the example of the Greek translators of the Old Testament who similarly eliminate every mention of the ass from its pages. St. Matthew, writing for Jews, felt no such scruple, but following the Greek Version's misinterpretation he introduces "an ass and its colt." St. John has rightly "a young" or "little ass." (4) Concerned as they have been hitherto exclusively with our Lord's Galilean ministry and, moreover, solicitous to conceal the story of Mary's past shame, the earlier Evangelists have no record of the raising of Lazarus; and on the data of their narratives it is difficult to understand the reason of the wild enthusiasm which greeted our Lord's entry into Jerusalem. Observe how St. John points out the explanation (cf. vers. 17, 18). The spectators of the miracle at Bethany had "borne record"—had "testified," and the worshippers who had come up to the Feast had heard the amazing story; and therefore it was that they trooped out to Bethany on learning of His arrival there. In truth, though it be expressly recorded only by St. John, there is no incident of our Lord's ministry more strongly attested than this His greatest miracle. "Nothing," says Ewald, "can be more historical than this occurrence." Without it the enthusiasm of the populace is inexplicable; and but for that enthusiasm He would have been immediately arrested by the hostile rulers. As it was, they could only stand by in impotent chagrin. "Ye behold that ye are doing no good. See! the world is gone after him."

LAST SCENE OF HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY

xii. 20-50

20 *And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast :*

21 *The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.*

22 *Philip cometh and telleth Andrew : and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.*

23 *And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.*

24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*

25 *He that loveth his life shall lose it ; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.*

26 *If any man serve me, let him follow me ; and where I am, there shall also my servant be : if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*

27 *Now is my soul troubled ; and what shall I say ? Father, save me from this hour : but for this cause came I unto this hour.*

28 *Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.*

29 *The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered : others said, An angel spake to him.*

30 *Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.*

31 *Now is the judgment of this world : now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*

32 *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

33 *This he said, signifying what death he should die.*

34 *The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever : and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up ? who is this Son of man ?*

35 *Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you : for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.*

36 *While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.*

37 *But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him :*

38 *That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report ? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed ?*

39 *Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,*

40 *He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart ; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.*

41 *These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.*

42 *Nevertheless among the chief rulers, also many believed on him ; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue :*

43 *For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*

44 *Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.*

45 *And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.*

46 *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.*

47 *And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not : for I come not to judge the world, but to save the world.*

48 *He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him : the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*

49 *For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.*

50 *And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.*

IT was on the Monday morning that our Lord made His entry into Jerusalem; and now, assuming our acquaintance with all that happened during the interval as recorded by the earlier Evangelists (cf. Mt. xxi. 12-xxiii; Mk. xi. 12-xii. 44; Lk. xix. 45-xxi. 4), the narrative leaps forward to the Wednesday afternoon. It had been a day of sharp controversy with the rulers in the court of the Temple, and after foiling their successive attacks our Lord had uttered in the hearing of the multitude His terrible indictment of the Scribes and Pharisees (cf. Mt. xxiii). It was now toward evening when He must betake Himself with the Twelve to their nightly retreat on Mount Olivet, and Philip had left Him resting in the Temple-court and perhaps, since he was the purveyor of the Apostle-company (cf. vi. 5-9), gone to procure provisions in the city. As he went about his business, he encountered a group of strangers. And who were these? They were Greeks, which signifies Gentiles (cf. Rom. i. 16), yet they had come up to worship at the Feast; and so it appears that they belonged, like the good Centurion of Capernaum (cf. Mt. viii. 5-13, where see exposition), to that class of Gentiles who figure so largely in the Book of Acts as "fearers" or "worshippers of God"—earnest heathen who, disowning their outworn idolatries, had turned to the Jewish faith in one living and true God, and while eschewing its ceremonial joined in the worship of Synagogue and Temple, frequently displaying, like Cornelius, the Centurion of Cæsarea, an exemplary devotion and generosity. Those Greeks were "God-fearers." Like that other distinguished representative of their order, the Ethiopian Chamberlain (cf. Ac. viii. 27), they "had come to Jerusalem for to worship" at the Feast. They had heard the fame of our Lord and had listened to His teaching in the Temple-court,

and recognising therein the satisfaction which their souls were craving, they desired an interview with Him. And so they approached Philip and begged of him an introduction. "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Always diffident, Philip sought his friend Andrew who in these later days shared with Peter and James and John the Master's peculiar confidence, and together they conducted them to Him.

Their approach was right welcome to our Lord in that dark hour when He was experiencing the bitterness of Jerusalem's unbelief, her imperviousness to all His gracious appeals. Nothing is told of the interview, and doubtless the reason is that He took them apart and talked with them alone. But something of His discourse has been preserved, whether as the Evangelist overheard it or as he afterwards gathered it from their lips. Look at the closing paragraph of the chapter (vers. 44-50). It has always been a puzzle to interpreters, coming in as it does so disconnectedly after the Evangelist has not merely told of our Lord's final admonition to the multitude but judicially summed up the results of His now completed ministry in Jerusalem. It is inconceivable that, as some ancient expositors supposed, He returned and added those words, addressing them especially to the "many of the rulers" who, like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa, feared to confess Him, or that He spoke them to His disciples in the course of His departure with them. More reasonable is the view that they are a summary by the Evangelist of the Lord's teaching which, as he has just stated, the Jews had rejected. It is a common fancy nowadays that the passage has got misplaced and should follow our Lord's admonition (ver. 36) "While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may become sons of light"; but surely it is more fitly regarded as a report of His discourse to the Greeks. Indeed it is hardly a report, else the Evangelist would have entered it in its proper place between vers. 22, 23. It is a bare summary, a meagre outline; and precisely as a modern writer would have made it a footnote, the Evangelist appends it at the close of the narrative. Observe the themes on which our Lord discoursed: His divine commission (ver. 44); His oneness with God

(ver. 45) ; the illumination of faith (ver. 46)—a theme befitting earnest souls groping after the light ; the responsibility which His gracious appeal imposed on all who heard it and the tremendous issues which confronted them—condemnation or life eternal (vers. 47-50).

All these were familiar themes whereon our Lord had often already dwelt ; and therefore it was needless for the Evangelist to report His present discourse at length. But two things he makes plain. One is the gladness wherewith our Lord welcomed these earnest men who approached Him in the hour of His rejection by His own people (cf. i. 11)—forerunners as they were of the myriads of heathendom whom He would yet win, the other sheep whom He must bring (cf. x. 16), the scattered children of God whom by His sacrificial death He would gather home (cf. xi. 52). And the other is the success of the interview. The Greeks responded to His appeal ; and when He had done discoursing with them, He looked round on His disciples and the multitude and exclaimed : “ The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified.” It was an hour of seeming failure and imminent death ; yet His failure was the path to victory and His death “ the gate of life ”—a larger and nobler life. “ Except the grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth itself alone ; but if it die, it beareth much fruit.” This the law of harvest is a universal ordinance.

Knowledge by suffering entereth,
And Life is perfected by Death.

And so, like a leader calling his troops to battle (cf. Mt. x. 39 ; Lk. xvii. 33), He challenges His hearers to face the stern ordeal and follow Him on the heroic path.

But how grim was the ordeal ! how hard the path for flesh and blood ! And even as He spoke, a vision of His Passion opened before Him, and His heart faltered. It was a foretaste of His struggle in Gethsemane (cf. Mt. xxvi. 36-46 ; Mk. xiv. 32-42 ; Lk. xxii. 40-46). “ Now,” He sighed, “ is My soul troubled. And what am I to say ? ” The next clause has been diversely construed. It has been taken as a question (“ Father,

save Me from this hour ? ”), continuing His soliloquy. “ What am I to say ? Am I to say, ‘ Father, save Me from this hour ’ ? ” And then He answers the question, rejecting the suggestion : “ Nay, it was for this that I came unto this hour.” But surely that were too theatrical, unfitting a moment so impassioned. The clause is not a rhetorical question but an entreaty. “ What am I to say ? ” He cried ; then after a pause He craved deliverance : “ Father, save Me from this hour.” But hardly had the prayer passed His lips when he recalled it : “ Nay, it was for this that I came unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name.”

And then a marvellous thing befell. An answer rang out of Heaven : “ I both have glorified it and again will glorify it.” Twice before had the like occurred : first at the Baptism of our Lord when a voice out of Heaven proclaimed Him to the Baptist as indeed the Son of God, the Promised Saviour whose advent he had been commissioned to announce (cf. Mt. iii. 17) ; and again on the Mount of Transfiguration when a voice out of the cloud proclaimed Him to the favoured three (cf. Mt. xvii. 5). It was ever the same voice, but in each instance the wonder grew. At the Baptism it spoke only to the Baptist and was unheard by the multitude. He alone heard it, forasmuch as he alone required the assurance, and his spiritual ear alone was opened to receive it (cf. Jo. i. 33). On the Holy Mount it spoke to the three, since the veil of sense had been lifted from their hearts and they saw what the natural eye could not see and heard what the natural ear could not hear. But now in the Temple-court it spoke to all the assembled multitude. It was a natural voice piercing the veil of sense. And if ever it was meet that God should break the silence and speak to mortal ears, surely it was then, at that momentous crisis, the consummation of the ages, when His Eternal Son Incarnate laid Himself on the Altar a willing Sacrifice for the sin of the world. It was indeed a veritable voice, and so the Evangelist testifies when he tells how the multitude received it. It was inarticulate to most, and they took it for the muttering of distant thunder ; but it was distinct in the ears of others—those who stood close about our Lord. They heard the words, and they exclaimed “ An angel hath spoken to Him.”

He hastened to inform them what it meant. "It is not for My sake that this voice hath been uttered but for yours." All the days of His sojourn in their midst He had been addressing to them His appeal ever more urgently, and now, that they might be without excuse, God had spoken in attestation thereof. He had made His appeal, and God had approved it: would they hearken? It was their hour of trial. "Now is the judgment of this world; now the Prince of this world shall be cast out." And who would then be the world's Prince? "I," said He in language which already He had repeatedly used with ever clearer allusion to His redeeming Passion (cf. iii. 14, viii. 28), "if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Myself." "This He said," explains the Evangelist, "signifying by what manner of death He was soon to die." He would then be the Prince of this world (cf. Ac. ii. 36, iii. 15, v. 31). His cross would be His throne and its shame His glory. So here with His Passion before Him He declares; and so, strange as it was to them at the moment, His disciples afterwards recognised when, reading it into the ancient Psalm (xcvi. 10), they sang: "Say among the nations, The Lord reigneth *from the Tree*."

Accomplished now is what is told
By David in his psalm of old,
Who saith, "The heathen world shall see
God as their King upon the tree."

The multitude of worshippers included citizens of Jerusalem—"Jerusalemites," as the Evangelist somewhat contemptuously designates them (cf. vii. 25-31, where see exposition); and after their wont they raised a theological question. Observe what their professed difficulty was. At the outset (ver. 23) He had spoken of "the Son of Man being glorified," and they had understood that by the Son of Man He meant Himself. He claimed to be the Messiah, and the voice from Heaven had approved His claim. So far all was clear. But now He has just told them that He, the Son of Man, would be "lifted up from the earth," which, missing the reference to His Passion, they construed as signifying merely His removal from their midst. And here lay their difficulty. It was written (cf.

Pss. xlv. 6, cx. 4; Is. ix. 7; Dan. vii. 14) that the Messiah "abideth for ever," and it would seem to follow that the Son of Man was other than the Messiah. "Who," they asked, "is this 'Son of Man'?" It was a petty and vexatious quibble, and our Lord disdained it. The night was falling, and He must be gone. "A little while longer," said He, "is the light among you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness overwhelm you (cf. i. 5)." And therewith He left them. "He went away and was hidden from them" (cf. viii. 59).

Thus ended His public ministry. And truly it was a tragic issue. "Though," says the Evangelist, "He had done so many" or rather "so great signs in their sight, they did not believe in Him"; and in their hopeless obduracy he sees an exemplification of the solemn law which operates inexorably in every domain, the physical, the intellectual, and the spiritual—that decay is ever the penalty of neglect (cf. Mt. xii. 31, 32; Mk. iii. 28–30, where see exposition). Eyes that will not see go blind; ears that will not hear grow deaf; hearts that despise love's importunities grow callous. It is never an arbitrary doom. Thus it is written that "the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart" (Ex. x. 1, 20, 27); but what went before? First "he sinned more and more, and hardened his heart," and so "the heart of Pharaoh was hardened" (ix. 34, 35); and then, and only then, when he had resisted every appeal, was his doom spoken: "I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that ye may know that I am the Lord." And so it happened with the people of Jerusalem, as the tragedy is here portrayed in the language of the ancient prophet (cf. Is. liii. 1; vi. 9, 10). First they would not believe. "Lord, who believed our report? And the arm of the Lord—to whom was it revealed?" And because they would not believe, it came to pass that they could not. "He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they should see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and"—not "be converted" but—"turn, and I should heal them." Here is the scriptural definition of "conversion" (cf. exposition of Mt. xviii. 3). It begins with God and ends with God, but the sinner too has his part. God's part is first the revealing of His grace. And what is the

sinner's part? He sees with his eyes, understands with his heart, and turns, or, in old English phrase (cf. Is. vi. 10), "converts"; he looks, considers, and responds. And then God heals him. Thus, if a sinner be unsaved, the reason is not that God would not save him but that he closed his eyes to the gracious revelation and refused the appeal of the Blessed Spirit. And thus the scriptural question is not "Have we been converted?" as though we must wait for God's intervention. It is always "Have we converted? Have we turned?"

O turn at last at My reproof!
And in that happy hour
His bless'd effusions on your heart
My Spirit down shall pour.

Indiscriminate censure is never wholly just, and so the Evangelist recognises in this his arraignment of Jerusalem. There was in those days a reign of terror in the city. To confess our Lord was to incur the dread sentence of excommunication (cf. ix. 22); and there were many "even of the rulers" who in their hearts believed in Him yet durst not confess Him. It is easy to censure such and charge them with cowardice; but who that knows the human heart would lightly condemn them? Martyrdom is never easy, and harder still is it to sever the bonds of ancient fellowship and human kinship, and a loyal soul will hold by these to the last. See how gently the Evangelist censures those waverers. "They did not confess Him lest they should be excommunicated; for"—so should his words be rendered—"they esteemed the opinion of men more than the opinion of God." But the day of decision came, and some of them at least, like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa, right nobly faced the ordeal.

THE UPPER ROOM (xiii, xiv)

1. A LESSON IN HUMILITY

xiii. 1-17

1 *Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*

2 *And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him ;*

3 *Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God ;*

4 *He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments ; and took a towel, and girded himself.*

5 *After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.*

6 *Then cometh he to Simon Peter : and *Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet ?*

7 *Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now ; but thou shalt know hereafter.*

8 *Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.*

9 *Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.*

10 *Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit : and ye are clean, but not all.*

11 *For he knew who should betray him ; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.*

12 *So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you ?*

* Gr. he.

13 *Ye call me Master and Lord : and ye say well ; for so I am.*

14 *If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet ; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*

15 *For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*

16 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord ; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.*

17 *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

IT was on the Wednesday of the Passion-week that the scene which we have just considered, the closing scene of our Lord's public ministry, was enacted in the Temple-court ; and now, passing over His discourse to the Twelve that evening on Mount Olivet regarding things to come (cf. Mt. xxiv, xxv ; Mk. xiii ; Lk. xxi. 5-36) and next morning's preparations for the Paschal celebration (cf. Mt. xxvi. 1-5, 14-19 ; Mk. xiv. 1, 2, 10-16 ; Lk. xxii. 1-13), St. John brings us to the Supper that evening in the Upper Room. Since his predecessors have already told of the institution of the memorial sacrament, he assumes our knowledge thereof, and adds to their record his own precious reminiscences of the evening's hallowed communion, especially our Lord's farewell discourse.

One thing had especially impressed him during those last days—the peculiar tenderness of the Master's bearing toward His disciples. “ Before the Feast of the Passover Jesus, knowing that His hour had come that He should pass out of this world unto the Father, much as He had loved His own that were in the world, now loved them ”—not “ unto the end ” but—“ unto the utmost—loved them as He had never done before.” It was the tenderness of parting ; and His heart was full to overflowing when they gathered that night for the last time in the Upper Room. At the very outset His tenderness was sorely tried. St. Luke has told (cf. xxii. 24-30, where see exposition) how a contention arose among the Twelve which of them should be accounted the greatest ; and here St. John shows its occasion. It was the fashion at a feast that a slave should receive the guests on their arrival and ere they took their places at table

lave their dusty feet (cf. Lk. vii. 44). The friend—none other, as we have learned (cf. Mk. xiv. 51, 52, where see exposition), than Mary the mother of John Mark—who had furnished the Upper Room (cf. Mt. xxvi. 17-19), had placed a basin and towel in readiness; and she would have provided also a slave had it not been that the Lord had desired that the meeting-place should be kept secret lest it be invaded by the emissaries of the Sanhedrin. Hence the "strife," the "contention" which arose among the Twelve on their arrival. None of them would stoop to the menial office, and they took their places at table with unwashed feet.

At the moment the Master took no notice, but by and by He administered to them an impressive rebuke. It was not "after supper" but "during supper," "while supper was in progress"; and the precise point appears in the course of the narrative. According to established usage the paschal celebration began with the drinking of a cup of wine; and thereafter the youngest of the household put the question "What mean ye by this service?" and the head of the house explained its historic significance (cf. Ex. xii. 26, 27). Here it was that our Lord had His opportunity. For the customary explanation He substituted an acted parable. He rose from His couch and performed the menial office which they had all disdained. "He cometh then" or "So He cometh to Simon Peter." Evidently He began with him, not because he was the chief of the Apostles but because he had, after his manner, been the hottest in the contention. He was shocked. "Lord," he cried, "*Thou wash my feet!*" "What I am doing," answered the Master, promising an explanation, "thou knowest not at present, but thou shalt perceive afterwards." "Never shalt Thou wash my feet—never!" "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me," the Lord replied, anticipating the lesson. For His humiliation is our salvation, and our hope lies in humble acceptance of His infinite sacrifice. "Proud man," says St. Augustine, "would perish unless a lowly God found him." The argument went home. Where the Master's honour was concerned, Peter would stand out; but where it was a question of his own ill-deserving, he could only bow his

head in meek submission. "Lord," he cried, leaping in his impetuous fashion to the other extreme, "not my feet only but also my hands and my head." Ah, that was going too far, and a smile would play on the Master's face. A soul which has been bathed in "the laver of regeneration" (cf. Tit. iii. 5 R.V. marg.) is for ever clean and needs only washing from the daily defilement of the way. "One that hath been"—not here "washed" but—"bathed hath no need save to wash his feet: he is clean all over. And ye are clean, but," He adds significantly, "not all." It was a covert intimation to Judas that He knew of his treason, his compact with the rulers. What would the traitor do now? Would the discovery of his guilt stay his evil purpose? With this hope the Lord pursued His office. After Peter's example no objection was raised, and when his turn came, Judas submitted like the rest. A word, a look would have sufficed to intimate a change of heart, but he gave no token.

Sadly the Lord resumed His couch. "Perceive ye," said He, explaining His acted parable as He had promised Peter (cf. ver. 7), "what I have done to you? Ye call Me 'the Teacher' and 'the Lord.' If I then washed your feet, I the Lord and the Teacher, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. A slave is not greater than his lord, nor an envoy (literally "apostle") greater than he that sent him." The feet-washing was an acted parable, but we miss much of its significance unless we understand that it was at the same time an acted proverb. "With unwashed feet" or, in a precisely similar sense, "with unwashed hands" was a proverb of old; and in the latter form it was still current in Elizabethan English, where to do a thing "with unwashed hands" meant to do it immediately, with incontinent haste, without waiting even to wash one's hands. "Rob me the exchequer the first thing thou doest," says Falstaff to Prince Hal, "and do it with unwashed hands too." And so of old, in view of its derivation from the sacred Mysteries, the proverb meant doing a thing without needful preparation, ignorantly handling high themes, sacrilegiously intruding upon holy ground. When "fools rushed in where angels fear to tread," meddling with things too

high for them, they did it "with unwashed feet." And thus when our Lord washed the feet of His disciples who a little ago had been striving which of them should be accounted the greatest, He told them more plainly than by words that they knew not what true greatness was and were yet uninitiated into the mysteries of His Kingdom, where the greatest is he who loves and serves the most. "I gave you an example that, even as I did to you, ye also should do."

2. THE TRAITOR'S EXPULSION

xiii. 18-30

18 *I speak not of you all : I know whom I have chosen : but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.*

19 **Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.*

20 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.*

21 *When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.*

22 *Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.*

23 *Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples whom Jesus loved.*

24 *Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.*

25 *He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it ?*

26 *Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a †sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.*

27 *And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.*

28 *Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.*

29 *For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that*

* Or, *From henceforth.*

† Or, *morsel.*

Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast ; or, that he should give something to the poor.

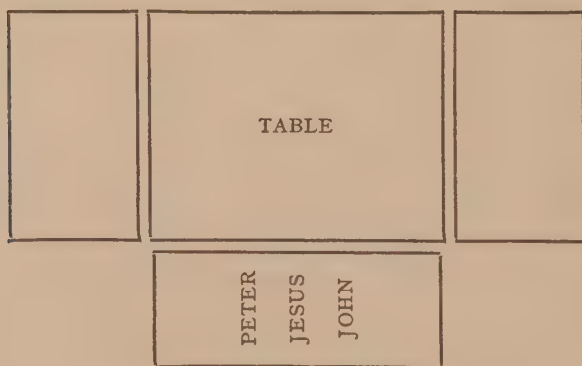
30 He then having received the sop went immediately out : and it was night.

IT was a bitter disappointment to our Lord when Judas hardened his heart against His appeal at the feet-washing. While he remained communion was impossible ; and our Lord now addresses Himself to the delicate task of compelling his withdrawal without openly charging him with treason and thus exciting a storm of indignation in the breasts of his faithful fellows. First He reverts to His previous announcement (ver. 10) "Ye are clean, but not all." "I know," says He, "whom I chose (cf. vi. 70)," meaning not their election to eternal life but His choice of them to be with Him in His earthly ministry. He had chosen them, even as of old God chose Saul, because He had recognised in them qualities which fitted them for the high vocation ; but it lay with them thereafter to justify His choice, and one of them, like Saul, had belied his early promise and foully betrayed the Master's trust. Observe how He makes the heavy announcement in language broken by emotion. It is grammatically legitimate to construe the sentence after the manner of our Version, but more probably it is elliptical : "I know whom I chose ; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled (Ps. xli. 9) 'He that eateth My bread hath lifted up his heel against Me.' . . ." He meant to conclude : "one of you will perpetrate this worst disloyalty, violating 'the covenant of salt' (cf. exposition of Mt. xxvi. 17-29) " ; but grief chokes His voice and the sentence is broken. Then recovering Himself He continued. He had long foreseen the issue (cf. vi. 64, 70), and hitherto He had mercifully kept it hidden, hoping to the last that Judas might repent and unwilling to grieve his fellows ; but now the time for reticence was past. He must forewarn them lest, taking them unaware, it should shatter their faith. "Now I am telling you ere it come to pass, that ye may believe when it cometh to pass that I am He." They too in after days would experience the treason of false brethren (cf. 2 Cor. xi. 26), and He bids them

remember the word which He had spoken to them when He gave them their commission (cf. Mt. x. 40): "He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." This would be their consolation then—a twofold consolation: they would be sharing His bitter experience, and the treason would not be against them but against the Master who had sent them and against God who had sent their Master.

Here again emotion overpowered Him. "When He had thus said, Jesus was troubled in spirit." But they must hear the terrible truth. "Verily, verily I tell you, one of you shall betray Me." They looked aghast in each other's faces. Which of them did He mean? The ensuing scene is hardly intelligible without a knowledge of the arrangement of an ancient feast. The company did not sit at table but reclined on couches, each leaning on his left elbow that his right hand and arm might have

Triclinium



free play. There were three couches (whence *triclinium* or "three-couchery"), skirting three sides of the table, the fourth side being left open for the convenience of the attendants. The Greek and Roman rule—the ideal rather than the practice—was that the company should not number more than the nine Muses—three to each couch, nor less than the three Graces—one to each couch; but no such restriction obtained among

the Jews. Nor would the order of precedence, so punctiliously enforced not only by Gentiles but by the proud Pharisees (cf. Mt. xxiii. 6 ; Lk. xiv. 7), be observed in the Upper Room, except thus far—that our Lord occupied the position of host, the middle place on the middle couch, while John as “ the disciple whom He loved ” lay in front of Him, the chief guest’s place, thus, as the phrase was, “ reclining in His bosom ” (cf. Lk. xvi. 23 ; Jo. i. 18).

Now see what happened. On the Master’s announcement that one of them should betray Him the disciples looked at each other in speechless amazement. John, “ reclining (not “ leaning ”) in Jesus’ bosom,” turned his head backward and looked at his comrade Peter who reclined behind the Master ; and Peter “ beckoned ” or rather “ nodded to him ” that he should ask whom He meant. Here John displayed that constant discretion which had made him the Master’s confidant. He did not start up and put the question openly. Observe what is written (ver. 25) : “ He fell back thus (that is, as his position allowed) on Jesus’ breast, and saith to Him,” looking up in His face and whispering the question : “ Lord, who is it ? ” And the Master whispered the secret to him : “ It is the man for whom I shall dip the fragment and give it to him.” It was an ordinance of the paschal celebration that ere the eating of the lamb’s flesh, which was the Supper proper, the company should each take a cake of unleavened bread and, breaking it, wreath the fragments with bitter herbs and dip them in the *charoseth*, a paste of dried fruits crushed and moistened with vinegar, symbolising the clay wherewith their fathers had made bricks during their bitter bondage in Egypt. So they now did ; and our Lord dipped a fragment of His bread and handed it to Judas—“ Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot ” says the Evangelist according to the authentic text, as though exhibiting by this recital of his ancestral dignity (see exposition of Mt. x. 4) how far the wretch had fallen. At an ancient feast it was a special kindness when a host gave a guest a portion from his own dish (cf. Gen. xliii. 34 ; 1 Sam. ix. 23, 24) ; and when our Lord thus entreated Judas, it was His final appeal. He told the traitor that he was still dear to His heart, and would he even now

repent, all would be forgiven. But alas! the appeal was unavailing. Judas accepted the token of love from the Master's hand unmoved, and thereby he sealed his doom. It happened with him as with "that miserable mortal," Francis Spira, when he stifled the Holy Spirit's pleading and signed his recantation. "I felt," he afterwards confessed, "a wound in my will that I have never got over since; my will has never been itself since that fatal morning: it is paralysed at the heart." And even so it befell the traitor when he thus did despite unto the Spirit of grace. His soul was blasted. "After the sop, then entered Satan into him."

The Lord had done His utmost to win Judas all unavailingly, and nothing remained but to rid the Upper Room of his malign presence. "What thou doest," said He, "do quickly." It was a covert intimation that he should betake himself to his evil business, and he understood it; but none of the Eleven did, not even John, since he had no thought that the crime which had just been confided to him was so near. And as for the others any suspicion which they might have entertained of their unhappy comrade had been dispelled by the seeming honour which the Master had done him in giving him the sop. Nor was His exhortation spoken in anger, and they fancied that He was merely bidding Judas discharge some neglected office belonging to him as treasurer. Two naturally occurred to their minds. One was the purchase of "the things which they had need of against the Feast." Most unwarrantably it has been supposed that "the Feast" here signifies the Paschal Supper; and hence it has been inferred that here and in several other passages to be considered in due course (cf. xviii. 28, xix. 14, 31, 42) St. John makes out that the supper which our Lord ate on the eve of His betrayal was not the Passover, as the other Evangelists represent, but fell on the previous evening. It rules out the idea that "the Feast" never signified merely the Paschal Supper. It was the festal season occupying a whole week. It did not end with the Supper but continued over the following day; and since this was a holiday and moreover Friday, whatever was needful not only for the day but for the ensuing Sabbath must be procured betimes. And so the

Eleven fancied that Judas had forgotten this and the Master was bidding him repair his neglect, or else that He was charging him with some office of charity—a business regarding which the dishonest traitor professed much solicitude (cf. xii. 6). Glad to escape open exposure, he withdrew without a word. “And,” says the Evangelist, “it was night.” It is the touch of a literary artist. The wretch passed from the light of the festal chamber into the outer darkness, from the light of the Saviour’s face into the deeper darkness where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

3. FOREWARNING OF PETER'S DENIAL

xiii. 31-38

31 *Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.*

32 *If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.*

33 *Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me : and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come ; so now I say to you.*

34 *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

35 *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

36 *Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou ? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now ; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.*

37 *Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now ? I will lay down my life for thy sake.*

38 *Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake ? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.*

THE traitor's withdrawal was a relief to the Master ; and that not merely because He might now unbosom Himself to the faithful Eleven but for a larger reason. Judas had gone to execute his fell purpose. The die was now cast ; the long suspense was ended ; and presently the Lord would face the dread ordeal which would issue in His triumph. " Now," He exclaimed, " is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." Then as ever God's glory was His sole concern, and therefore His own glory was assured (cf. vii. 18).

“If God be glorified in Him, God also will glorify Him in Himself; and straightway will He glorify Him.”

And then He addressed Himself to His immediate task—the counselling of His disciples in view of their approaching bereavement. Observe the tenderness of His address. He had always been among them like a father among his children; and once before (cf. Mk. x. 24) He had styled them “children.” But now, when they are so soon to be left orphans (cf. xiv. 18 marg.), He employs for the first and only time the endearing diminutive, “Little children.” It was, so far as the record goes, the only time they ever heard the phrase from His lips, and it went home to John. He never forgot it, and it was thus that in after days with a like tenderness he addressed his own disciples (cf. 1 Jo. ii. 1, 12, 28, iii. 7, 18, iv. 4, v. 21). Tenderness befitted the moment, since He had grievous tidings to tell. He was presently leaving them, and, as He had already said to the rulers in their hearing (cf. vii. 33, viii. 21), going where they could not come. And what was His parting charge? “A new commandment I give unto you—that ye love one another.” Had that been all, it would have been no new commandment; for it was so written in the ancient Law (cf. Lev. xix. 18) and He had constantly reaffirmed it (cf. Mt. v. 43-46; Lk. x. 25-37). But see what follows: “even as I loved you, that ye also love one another.” It was an old commandment with a new ideal and a new inspiration; and that ideal they would see, that inspiration they would feel, when they beheld in His redeeming Passion the revelation of His infinite love for them and all the children of men.

Here lay the importance of this His new commandment—that, if they faithfully observed it, they would thereby keep His love alive upon the earth when He was gone. “Herein shall all recognise that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one for another.” Nor did they disregard it. It appears from St. John’s first epistle (cf. ii. 8-11, iii. 10-18, iv. 7-v. 2) that the new commandment was the burthen of his preaching all the long and fruitful years of his ministry in the Province of Asia. And St. Jerome has preserved a moving story—how in extreme old age when he could no longer teach, the Evangelist still had

himself carried into the assemblies of his disciples at Ephesus and would always repeat this one brief message: "Little children, love one another." Weary of its iteration they at length remonstrated: "Master, wherefore dost thou say always this?" "Because," He answered, "it is the Lord's commandment, and if only it be done, it sufficeth." And Tertullian tells how in early days ere the Christians fell to doctrinal controversy, "See," the heathen would say, "how they love one another!" acknowledging them by this token as the Lord's disciples and knowing Him through them.

He had more to say of the new commandment, but here He was interrupted by a question from Peter who, like the rest, was troubled by His announcement that He was going away where they could not go. "Lord, where art Thou going?" Evidently his idea was that in view of the menace of the rulers He purposed taking flight from the city. "Where I am going," He answered, "thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards." He would have explained that He was going home to God, and they would follow Him thither when their time came; but Peter, clinging to his fancy, took Him to mean that He would flee alone and they would by and by join Him in His retreat, and he broke in with an asseveration that he would share His flight at all hazards. "Lord, wherefore can I not follow Thee immediately? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." It was no mere protestation of devotion. Peter had in mind the announcement of the betrayal, and with characteristic self-confidence he boasts that, whoever the traitor might be, he would never fail in loyalty. It was a foolish and mischievous boast. The Master read in it an evil augury, and at once to humble him and to allay the resentment of the others He administered to Peter a stern rebuke: "Thou wilt lay down thy life for My sake! Verily, verily I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied Me time and again (cf. Mt. xxvi. 34)." Nor did He leave it there. It was now that He instituted His sacramental memorial, the Holy Communion (cf. Mt. xxvi. 26-29; Mk. xiv. 22-25; Lk. xxii. 19, 20; 1 Cor. xi. 23-25), knitting their disquieted hearts in holy brotherhood.

4. *WORDS OF CHEER* (xiv)

THE Holy Sacrament banished strife and reproach from the Upper Room. At length the hour had arrived which our Lord had so eagerly desired (cf. Lk. xxii. 15, 16) as He saw the end approaching—an hour of quiet fellowship with His faithful disciples when He might, ere He suffered, cheer them with His parting counsels and the revelation of high hopes which hitherto they were unable to receive. The record thereof which the beloved disciple has written stands evermore as the very Holy of Holies not alone of his peerless Gospel but of all the Sacred Scriptures. Who can read it without a sure persuasion that these are indeed the words of Him who spake as never man spake? It is told in Lockhart's biography of Sir Walter Scott that, when the end was near, he had himself drawn in his bath-chair into his library at Abbotsford and placed by the central window that he might look down upon the Tweed. He surveyed the scene which he loved so well and which his books have celebrated, and then, "Read to me," said he. Lockhart glanced round the array of volumes lining the walls and inquired which book he would have. "Need you ask?" was the answer. "There is but one." And Lockhart took the Bible and, turning to St. John's Gospel, read the fourteenth chapter. "He listened with mild devotion, and said when I had done—'Well, this is a great comfort.' " And so it has proved to myriads of dying men. It is hither that we ever turn in the last solemn strait, and never turn in vain.

Look then at this immortal chapter, this golden page where the disciple whom He loved has written, "with a quill taken from the wings of the holy Dove," the exceeding great and precious promises wherewith our ever blessed Lord cheered the Eleven while He still tarried with them in the Upper Room.

(I) THE WELCOME HOME

xiv. I-14

1 *Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

2 *In my Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

3 *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

4 *And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.*

5 *Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest ; and how can we know the way ?*

6 *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life : no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

7 *If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also : and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.*

8 *Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.*

9 *Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father ; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father ?*

10 *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me ? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself : but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.*

11 *Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me : or else believe me for the very works' sake.*

12 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also ; and greater works than these shall he do ; because I go unto my Father.*

13 *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

14 *If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

HERE He reverts to Peter's question "Where goest Thou?" (xiii. 36) and completes the answer which Peter's vain boast had interrupted. The key to the interpretation of His lovely prelude lies in a true understanding of that word which our Version, following the Latin Vulgate, renders "mansions"—an unfortunate rendering, since it carries in modern English a suggestion which is foreign alike to the Latin and to the Greek original. The noun occurs in the New Testament only here and again a little later (ver. 23) where it is rightly rendered "abode"; but the cognate verb is frequent on the sacred pages, and its use there illustrates its proper signification. Thus it is written (Lk. xix. 5) that when our Lord reached Jericho on His way to the last Passover, He craved a night's lodging of Zacchæus. "To-day," said He, "I must abide at thy house." And so the two disciples at Emmaus bade Him "abide" with them, since it was toward evening; and He went in to "abide" with them (xxiv. 29). Again it is written (Ac. ix. 43 R.V.) that Peter "abode" at Joppa with one Simon a tanner, meaning (cf. x. 6) that he "lodged" in his house, and that Paul "abode" at Corinth with his fellow-craftsman Aquila (xviii. 3), and on his way to Jerusalem at the close of his third mission he "abode" one day with the brethren at Ptolemais and many days with Philip the Evangelist at Cæsarea (xxi. 7-10). And so with the cognate noun "abode." It denoted not, as "mansion" would suggest, a fixed residence but a wayside station—the encampment of an army on the march and more commonly a traveller's resting-place, an inn or a hospitable dwelling, whither he turned aside to tarry for the night.

See how our Lord employs the word here, weaving it into a parable for the consolation of His disciples distressed by the thought of His departure from them. There was usually no lack of accommodation in an eastern *khan* or *caravanserai*; but occasionally, when there was much traffic on the highways, a belated traveller would find the inn crowded, and then he must fare wearily on his way or lie down in the open. So it happened to Joseph and Mary at the time of the first imperial census (cf. Lk. ii. 4-7). When they reached Bethlehem and sought

admission to the *caravanserai*, every "abode" was already occupied, and Mary had to lie down in the courtyard where the camels and asses were tethered ; and there "she brought forth her first-born son, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." It was no infrequent mischance with travellers, and our Lord and His disciples would experience it in the course of their homeless wanderings. And here He employs it for their consolation in view of His departure. Hitherto His fellowship had cheered them on the hard road, and now He was leaving them to journey alone. He was leaving them, but, He assures them, He was not forsaking them. He was going on before them to their destination, and when they reached it at the day's close, they would find an open door and a happy entrance. For He would be waiting and watching for them ; and when they appeared, He would come forth and bid them welcome to the abodes which He had prepared for them. "Let not your heart be troubled," He says. "Have faith in God, and in Me hath faith. In My Father's House there are many abodes ; if there were not, I would have told you : I am going to prepare room (the same word as in Lk. ii. 7) for you. And if I go and prepare room for you, I am coming again and will receive you unto Myself, that where I am, ye also may be."

It would be foolish to marvel that our Lord should thus liken the Father's House, that Eternal Rest, that Home of endless bliss, to a wayside inn. For the thought of the parable is not the after-blessedness but the welcome which awaits us there. And see how He assures us hereof. He tells us first that the Father's House, the goal of our long and weary pilgrimage, is no mean and narrow inn but a wide and spacious hospice with room enough and to spare.

There is grace enough for thousands
Of new worlds as great as this ;
There is room for fresh creations
In that upper home of bliss.

And more than this. Not only is there room but there is room for us—room and a welcome. For He is there, and we are His. "I am coming again, and will receive you unto Myself,

that where I am, ye also may be." His "coming again" is here not His Second Advent but the hour of death (cf. exposition of Mt. x. 16-23), which is for the believer a visitation of the Lord, His coming again to take His servant home, that "where He is, there may also His servant be" (cf. xii. 26). And thus our welcome is assured.

When I'm to die,
"Receive me," I'll cry;
For Jesus has loved me, I cannot tell why;
But this I can find—
We two are so joined
He'll not be in glory and leave me behind.

Observe how here as ever our Lord deals with the blessed hope of immortality, so keenly debated not only by the ancient philosophers but by the Jewish teachers of His day. It was the chief question at issue between the Sadducees and the Pharisees; "for the Sadducees said that there was no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confessed both" (Ac. xxiii. 8). Yet He never reasoned about it: He simply affirmed it. "Take My word for it," He says here. "In My Father's House there are many abodes. If there were not, I would have told you." The hope of immortality is instinctive in the human breast; and had it been an illusion, He would in no wise have suffered them to cherish it. And what is the implicit argument here? This He shows when He says: "Have faith in God, and in Me have faith." Faith in God is not enough; for it is very possible, as the history of religion and philosophy attests, to believe in God and yet disbelieve in the immortality of the soul. And therefore it is not enough to believe in God. We must, as St. Peter has it (cf. 1 Pet. i. 21), believe in God through Christ, recognising in the Eternal Son Incarnate the revelation of the Eternal Father, "the Visible Image of the Invisible God." Then His word is all we need. For it is the testimony of One who knew what lies behind the Veil and had come forth thence to declare it unto us. "Take My word for it," He says. "In My Father's House there are many abodes; if there were not, I would have told you: I am going to prepare room for you."

"And," He proceeds according to the authentic text, "where I am going, ye know the way." It was half a question, and He was about to answer it when Thomas, always despondent and slow of apprehension, broke in somewhat querulously: "Lord, we know not where Thou art going: how know we the way?" Unheeding the interruption at the moment, the Lord showed them the way. "I," said He, "am the Way." He might have said: "The way is the way which I am taking: follow in My steps." But this would have afforded doubtful guidance alike to the Eleven and to His disciples in after days. For He was going to Gethsemane, to the Judgment-hall, and to Calvary: was that their way too? So it has seemed to many who have given themselves in fond devotion to "the imitation of Christ," like the Irish saint Abrogastus, bishop of Spire in Germany, "who," says Thomas Fuller, "would be buried near the gallows, in imitation of our Saviour, whose grave was in Mount Calvary, near the place of execution," or George Whitfield at a later date, who, it is said, to approach as closely as he might to the example of the Divine Redeemer who was surrounded in His temptations by deserts and wild beasts, "was accustomed to select Christ Church Meadow as the scene, and a stormy night as the time, of his mental conflicts." In truth this is not imitation of Christ but mimicry; and it is very possible to do the things which He did without walking in His way. And therefore He said "I am the Way." And His meaning presently appears in His assurance that, though He was going away, He would abide with His disciples in spiritual presence. His unseen presence is peace and joy, and having these, we know that we are in the way; lacking these, we know that we have wandered from it. It is told how once at a hillside conventicle in the days of "bloody Claverhouse" the preacher, exhorting his hearers to keep near the Lord, covered his eyes with his hand. "As this hand," said he, "though but little, hides from me the light of the sun, so one sin, even the least, will hide from you the light of Christ's face." And the hiding of His face is an admonition that we are out of the way and have need to return in penitence to the Throne of Grace. Oftentimes, as the Eleven were experiencing

at that dark crisis, Christ's way is hard and painful ; but, as it is written (Pr. iv. 18 R.V. marg.), " the path of the righteous is as the light of dawn, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." And therefore says our Lord not only " I am the Way " but " I am the Truth." As we " walk in Him " (cf. Col. ii. 6), the Living Way, our darkness is illumined, our perplexities are resolved, and our fears dispelled. And furthermore, " I," says He, " am the Life"—not merely life hereafter but life here, ever fuller and deeper, according to the word of the ancient prophet (Is. xl. 31) : " They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run, and not be weary ; they shall walk, and not faint."

Now that He has thus told them of the way which He was going and which they too must take, He reverts to the other side of Thomas' question and tells them where He was going. His way was the way, the only way, to God and Heaven : " none cometh unto the Father but through Me " (cf. Eph. ii. 18). And thither He was now going—home to the Father. This He had already told them in His parable of the Wayside Inn (cf. vers. 2, 3) ; and why was it that, as the question of Thomas showed, the thought of the Father and the Father's House had left them so cold, so irresponsible ? It was because hitherto they had so ill understood His revelation and so little perceived the glory of His person as the Eternal Son of God Incarnate. " If ye had recognised Me, ye would have known My Father also. Now"—in that supreme hour of revelation—" ye are recognising Him and have seen Him."

Here Philip breaks in. " Lord," said he, " show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," " it is all we want"—the same word as in the Lord's response to St. Paul's entreaty (2 Cor. xii. 9) : " My grace is sufficient for thee." A sight of the Father, Philip meant, would divest the unknown Eternity of its mystery and dread. " So long time have I been with you," the Lord remonstrated, " and hast thou not known Me, Philip ? " Such dullness was especially inexcusable in Philip. For he was one of the five disciples whom the Lord had won at Bethabara in the morning of His ministry (cf. i. 43) and who had companied

with Him in daily fellowship all those three blessed years ; yet he had never recognised the wonder which was all the while before his eyes—God manifest in the flesh. “Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me ?” Herewith the Master turns from Philip and, as appears clearly in the original, addresses them all—no longer “thou” but “ye” : “the words which I speak unto *you* . . . believe *ye* Me . . . verily, verily I say unto *you* . . . whatsoever *ye* shall ask . . . if *ye* shall ask any thing.” The evidence of His oneness with the Father was in their ears and before their eyes. His words were not spoken “from Himself” (cf. vii. 17), nor were His works wrought “from Himself” (cf. viii. 28) : “the Father abiding in Me doeth His works.”

And then He vouchsafed them a large assurance. His departure would be no loss to them but rather an exceeding gain, since, as He afterwards explains, it would inaugurate a nobler dispensation—the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. It would be in truth the final consummation of His redemptive ministry ; and the works which He had done in the days of His flesh, wonderful as they were, were but foretastes of the work which they would achieve as the heralds of His salvation. “He that believeth in Me, the works which I am doing he also shall do ; and greater things (not “greater works”) shall he do, because I am going unto the Father.” And furthermore, though He was going away and they might no longer appeal to Him as they had been wont in their perplexities, they would still have access to Him in prayer ; and prayer would henceforth have a new potency inasmuch as it would be offered “in His name,” that is, on the ground of His atonement for the sin of the world (cf. xvi. 23, 24, where see exposition). “Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, this will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” It is in Christ that men are blessed of God, and it is in blessing men that God is glorified. Observe what follows according to the best authenticated text : “If ye shall ask Me for any thing in My name”—always on that sure ground, that prevailing plea—“I will do it.” Elsewhere (cf. xv. 16, xvi. 23) He says “Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father . . . if ye shall ask the Father for any thing, He will give it you in My name.”

And our Version, supported by numerous authorities, omits "Me" here. It might reasonably be supposed that this is the authentic reading and that "Me" is a scribal interpolation, were it not for the ensuing "I will do it" reiterating the "this will I do" of the previous verse. And in truth the diversity of our Lord's language is designed to enforce a momentous lesson. Even as to see the Eternal Son Incarnate was to see the Father, so in His glory He is still one with the Father; to pray to Him is to pray to the Father; and what the Father does is done in His name.

(2) THE PROMISE OF THE ADVOCATE

xiv. 15-24

15 *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

16 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever ;*

17 *Even the Spirit of truth ; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him : but ye know him ; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

18 *I will not leave you *comfortless : I will come to you.*

19 *Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more ; but ye see me : because I live, ye shall live also.*

20 *At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*

21 *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me : and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

22 *Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world ?*

23 *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words : and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

24 *He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings : and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.*

HERE is the supreme consolation which our Lord vouchsafed to the Eleven on the eve of His departure—the promise that when He was gone, they would not be left alone. Another would come in His room to abide with them evermore and continue His gracious ministration. This His Successor is the Holy Spirit, but in announcing His advent He

* Or, *orphans*.

designated Him otherwise, since only so could they receive the revelation. For they were Jews, and the Jewish religion was a rigid monotheism. It is true that the phrases "the spirit of God," "the spirit of the Lord," and "His holy spirit" (literally "the spirit of His holiness") are frequent on the pages of the Old Testament; but they denote there merely a divine influence, the vital and vitalising energy of the Divine Nature. The idea of the Holy Spirit as a Divine Person, co-essential and co-eternal with the Father and the Son in the unity of the Blessed Trinity, is a Christian revelation. All the days of His fellowship with them our Lord had been opening His disciples' minds to the truth, but it was in the Upper Room that He first definitely enunciated it; and to make it plain He there employed a new name.

And what is that new name? It appears in our Version as "the Comforter" (cf. xiv. 16, 26, xv. 26, xvi. 7); but beautiful as this designation is and truly as it defines the Holy Spirit's office, it is a misinterpretation and misses the grand truth which our Lord had immediately in view. The word in the original is *Paraclete*; and it is derived from a verb which signified primarily "to call for," "summon to one's side" (cf. Ac. xxviii. 20), and secondarily either "to exhort" (cf. 1 Cor. iv. 16) or "to comfort" (cf. 2 Cor. i. 3, 4). Hence, like Wycliffe and Luther before them, King James's translators render *Paraclete* by "Comforter"—an impossible rendering, since, being in Greek a passive form, it would mean not "comforter" but "comforted." And the blunder is the less excusable that in the only other passage where it occurs in the New Testament (1 Jo. ii. 1) it is rightly translated "Advocate" by all three—a forensic term, the correlative of "accuser," signifying one "called in" to support a cause and plead on its behalf in a court of law. In this sense the word *paraclete* was familiar to our Lord's disciples, since, like not a few other Greek terms, it had been imported into the Jewish parlance of their day. Thus it was a saying of Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob that "he who does one commandment gets himself one advocate (*paraclete*), and he who commits one transgression gets himself one accuser: repentance and good works are as a shield in the face of

punishment." And it is very remarkable that "the Paraclete" is one of the designations which Philo of Alexandria, that brilliant contemporary of our Lord, gave to the Divine Word as the Mediator between God and the world (see exposition of i. 1-18).

It was thus no unfamiliar phrase that our Lord employed when in the Upper Room He spoke of His Successor, the Holy Spirit, as "another Advocate whom the Father would send in His name, whom He would send unto them from the Father." And His thought, the revelation which He here proclaims, appears when side by side with the promise in the Upper Room we read in St. John's first epistle (ii. 1) of "our Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." The thought is that the history of redemption is a progressive revelation of grace in three successive dispensations. There is first the dispensation recorded in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, where God is presented as "the high and lofty One who inhabiteth Eternity," remote and inaccessible to the children of men. This was followed by a larger and more gracious dispensation, when God drew near and manifested Himself in the person of His Eternal Son Incarnate, who in the days of His flesh was His Advocate with the children of men, presenting His claims and pleading with them on His behalf. This dispensation in its turn was superseded when our Lord returned to His eternal glory. He left the world, but He did not leave it without a witness for God. "Another Advocate" came in His room, and He continues evermore the ministry of the Incarnate Saviour, pleading for God with the children of men, revealing to them their need, and winning them to penitence and faith. And more than this. Still in His glory our Blessed Lord, evermore "the Saviour and the Friend of man," pursues His advocacy—no longer, as in the days of His flesh, God's Advocate with man but man's Advocate with God, "our Advocate with the Father," our Representative in the court of Heaven, linking humanity with God even as by His Incarnation He had linked God with humanity. And thus it is our privilege in this the final dispensation of grace to enjoy a double advocacy—that of our Glorified Redeemer "who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh

intercession for us " (Rom. viii. 34), and is therefore " able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them " (Heb. vii. 25) ; and that of the Holy Spirit, ever present though invisible, pleading with us on God's behalf and besetting us with His manifold importunities.

In the passage before us our Lord's special purpose is to show the Eleven how they might know the reality of the Holy Spirit's ministry. " The natural man," says the Apostle (1 Cor. ii. 14), " receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him ; and he cannot recognise them, because they are spiritually examined." And even so says our Lord here : " The world cannot receive Him, because it beholdeth Him not, neither recogniseth Him." It is not by carnal sense or reason that the Holy Spirit's presence is known but by experience of His spiritual operation ; and inasmuch as they had this experience, the Eleven already knew Him. " Ye are recognising Him, because He abideth with you and shall be in you." And see how this experience is begotten within us. It begins with love for Christ. And, says Bunyan, " practical love is best. Many love Christ with nothing but the lick of the tongue." " Practical love is best " ; it is the only true love. For where we love, we must needs serve. " If ye love Me," what then ? Not " keep " but " ye will keep My commandments " or rather " ye will observe (cf. Mt. xxiii. 3) My commandments," " ye will keep an eye on My commandments " (the word rendered " watch " in Mt. xxvii. 36, 54). " He that hath My commandments and observeth them, he it is that loveth Me." A loving heart is an obedient heart, and only in such a heart will the Holy Spirit abide.

Here lay the consolation of the Eleven in that dark hour. The Master was going away, but " another Advocate " was coming in His room. " I will not leave you "—you " My little children " (cf. xiii. 33)—" orphans (cf. marg.) : I am coming unto you." See how He here proclaims at once the personality and the deity of the Holy Spirit. Even as God had come into the world in the person of Christ, so Christ comes to His disciples in the person of His Successor. " A little longer, and the world

no longer beholdeth Me"—since the world is cognisant only of what appears to carnal sense; "but ye behold Me, because I live and ye will be living too"—living, even though still in this mortal state, the larger, nobler life "beyond the sphere of time and sin and fate's control," the life which is "hid with Christ in God." "In that day ye shall recognise"—what was as yet so little intelligible to them—"that I am in My Father and ye in Me and I in you." Observe the sublime concatenation: Christ one with the Father, His people one with Christ, and Christ one with them.

So near, so very near to God!
 I cannot nearer be;
 For in the person of His Son
 I am as near as He.

And the link which unites His people with Christ and through Him with God is obedience born of love. "He that loveth Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

The Eleven had listened with bewilderment to the Master's exposition of truths which experience would in due time interpret to them but which were meanwhile beyond their comprehension; and here interposes Judas Lebbæus or Thaddæus as he was designated to distinguish him from his unhappy comrade the Man of Kerioth (cf. Mt. x. 3, where see exposition). "Lord," he asks, "what hath come to pass that Thou art about to manifest Thyself to us and not to the world?" His thought is illustrated by the sneer of our Lord's brethren at His Messianic claim when He visited Nazareth on His way up to Jerusalem on the eve of the Feast of Tabernacles (cf. vii 4): "If thou art doing these things, manifest thyself to the world." According to Jewish expectation the Messiah would be the King of Israel; and why, they meant, if He were the Messiah, did He not take His throne and inaugurate His glorious reign? Like the rest of the disciples Judas still clung to that Jewish ideal which had made it so difficult for them to take in the Lord's intimations of His Passion; and even now on the eve of the tragedy he anticipated a triumphant issue. He was in

truth no duller than the rest ; for even after the Resurrection they still clung to their worldly expectation and hoped that now at length the time had come for the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel (cf. Ac. i. 6). Hence it puzzled him and them too when the Master spoke of manifesting Himself not to the world but merely to such as loved Him.

Observe our Lord's reply. He did not seek to disabuse the minds of Judas and his fellows of their Jewish ideal. Experience and the teaching of the Holy Spirit would in due time enlarge their thoughts ; and meanwhile He merely reiterates and amplifies His promise. " If one love Me," He says, " he will observe My word (not " words "), and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and "—not " make Our abode " but—" make abode with him." Here again is that word rendered " mansion " at the beginning of the chapter ; and bearing in mind what we learned there of its signification, we perceive our Lord's meaning here. The interpretation is pointed by that cry of the ancient prophet in a time of national affliction when it seemed as though the Lord had forgotten His people (cf. Jer. xiv. 8 R.V.): " O Thou Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble, why shouldest Thou be as a sojourner in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night ? " As a sojourner, a wayfaring man who maketh abode with us, turning aside to tarry for a night : this is indeed all that He will be, all that He can be to us in our earthly pilgrimage. For the world is not our home. We are travellers here ; and when He visits us, it is not to stay but to commune with us and cheer and strengthen us that we may continue our journey with braver hearts. On the Mount of Transfiguration Peter's fond desire was that the Master and His heavenly visitants should stay there with himself and his comrades (cf. Mt. xvii. 4) ; but presently the glory faded, leaving the hilltop bleak and bare. The vision was but a glimpse of the joy which awaited them at the end of their earthly pilgrimage, beckoning them onward in faith and hope. And it is ever thus. We are strangers and pilgrims on the earth ; and when the Lord visits us, it is not to stay but to carry us forward on the homeward journey. If we go

with Him in loving devotion, then He will be our Comrade and our Guide even unto death ; but if we tarry, content with the things of earth, then He will go His way and leave us behind. Only as we follow Him whithersoever He goeth can we retain His blessed fellowship.

(3) OUR LORD'S LEGACY OF PEACE

xiv. 25-31

25 *These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.*

26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

27 *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

28 *Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father : for my Father is greater than I.*

29 *And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.*

30 *Hereafter I will not talk much with you : for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.*

31 *But that the world may know that I love the Father ; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.*

IT was now time to quit the Upper Room. The Lord had said much to the Eleven as they reclined with Him at the Table ; but there was much more in His heart, and even what He had said was largely incomprehensible to them. Yet it had in no wise been spoken in vain ; for the Holy Spirit when He came would not merely be their Teacher but would bring to their remembrance all that they had heard from His lips and reveal to them the significance thereof. And there was one sacred office which He would perform ere they left the chamber of communion. He had conversed with them all that evening like a father with his " little children " gathered

by his dying bed (cf. xiii. 33, xiv. 18), and now He delivers to them His last will and testament: "Peace I leave unto (not "with ") you." Peace is His legacy; and see how He defines it: "Peace, My peace, I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you." And what is the world's way of giving peace? It has two ways. One is the way of the Stoic philosophy, which counsels acquiescence, teaching us that sorrow and suffering are the portion of the children of men and bidding us face the inevitable with stout hearts and endure the worst with steadfast resolution, like the captain of a doomed ship who sets his teeth and stands to his post while she is sinking under him. It is indeed a heroic attitude, but it is an attitude of despair; and the evil of it is that it makes men not only stern and defiant but hard and unsympathetic. "I would as soon," says Sir Walter, "wish my hand to be as callous as horn, that it might escape an occasional cut or scratch, as I would be ambitious of the Stoicism which would render my heart like a piece of the nether millstone." Another way which the world has is that hope which "springs eternal in the human breast" that things will by and by come right. Is it poverty that ails us? Then surely our fortune will take a turn for the better. Or is it sickness? Then surely health will be restored and suffering cease. This instinctive optimism is not indeed without avail, yet at the best it goes but a little way, and it fails just where the need is sorest. In the lesser ills of life it is easy to anticipate a happier morrow; but what of those ills for which, we know very well, no morrow will ever bring relief, those burdens which we must carry all our days? What of one who is crippled and maimed beyond repair and knows that there is no healing for him and he must drag on, in weakness and pain, to his journey's end? Is there no comfort, no hope, no peace for him?

It is here, where other helpers fail and comforts flee, that the Blessed Saviour meets our sore need. "Peace, My peace," He says, "I give unto you," meaning in the first instance the peace which dwelt in His own heart all the days of His earthly sojourn and which was never so deep and full as in that distressful hour. And what was the secret thereof? It was

His devotion to the Father's will (cf. iv. 34, v. 30, vi. 38) and His faith in the Father's wise and benignant providence (cf. Mt. x. 29-31). And as we share His devotion and faith, we share also His peace. Truly it makes a blessed difference when we acknowledge God's sovereign purpose and the operation of His unseen hand in all our distresses and adversities, and recognise that these are no accidents but His appointments, serving high and beneficent ends if only we accept them bravely and believingly and let Him have His way, saying with our Lord in Gethsemane (cf. xviii. 11): "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" But is this enough? Surely the peace which our Lord bequeathed to His disciples is something more than the peace which dwelt in His own heart, something more needful for sinful men—the peace of pardon and reconciliation with God through His Infinite Sacrifice so soon to be accomplished on the Cross. It is at the Cross that our peace evermore begins. "Peace, My peace, I give unto you—the peace which is Mine and which I have made possible for you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" or rather "fearful" (cf. Mt. viii. 26). If we be Christ's, then we are God's; and what then need we fear in life or death or eternity?

And now ere rising from the Table our Lord concludes His discourse for the present with several observations. (1) Despite His cheering explanations the Eleven were still troubled by His announcement of His departure. Surely they were inexcusable; for what was it that He had told them? Not merely "I am going away" but "I am going away, and I am coming unto you." And even His going away, however distressful to themselves, should have gladdened them for His sake. "If ye had loved Me," He says, not doubting their love but thus playfully reminding them of an aspect of the situation which they were overlooking, "ye would have been rejoiced because I am"—not merely "going away" but—"going unto the Father, because the Father is greater than I." He was less than the Father in His state of humiliation, forasmuch as, for us men and for our redemption, He had become man, laying aside His proper glory; and should they not have rejoiced that now He

was going home to resume the glory which had been His with the Father before the world was (cf. xvii. 5)? (2) It was not to grieve them that He had told them of His departure nor merely to spare them the shock of a sudden surprise. It was to save their faith from shipwreck. "I have told you ere it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe." They would then recall His premonition, which now seemed so incredible, and realise that His death was no disaster but the appointed consummation. (3) He was appointed unto death, yet He was no helpless victim. His death was a voluntary sacrifice (cf. x. 17, 18). Construe the closing verses thus, and His meaning is plain: "No longer will I talk much with you; for the Prince of the world (cf. xii. 31) is coming (in the person of his agents, the traitor and the emissaries of the Sanhedrin). And he hath nothing in Me—no jurisdiction over Me; no, it is (for the ellipse cf. i. 8, ix. 3, xv. 25; 1 Jo. ii. 19) that the world may recognise that I love the Father and am doing even as the Father commanded Me."

Found guilty of excess of love,
It was Thine own sweet will that tied
Thee tighter far than helpless nails;
Jesus, our Love, is crucified!

The custom was that the Paschal Supper should close at midnight—no later since it was at midnight that the destroying angel had passed through the land of Egypt and the Israelites had taken their departure thence (cf. Ex. xi. 4, xii. 29-31), and no earlier since it was fancied that it was at midnight that the Messiah would appear, and it was required that the company should remain in readiness to bid Him welcome. In view of the subsequent course of events it can hardly have been midnight yet, and our Lord would gladly have tarried to the latest in the Upper Room; but He knew how the traitor had been employed since his dismissal, and He apprehended that at any moment the officers of the Sanhedrin might intrude and cut short His communing with the Eleven. It was time that they should betake themselves elsewhere. "Arise," said He; let us go hence."

ADJOURNED DISCOURSE (xv, xvi)

IT is natural to suppose that on quitting the Upper Room they would immediately betake themselves to their accustomed retreat in the Garden of Gethsemane; and this further discourse has been taken as a record of our Lord's communing with the Eleven on the way thither, the parable of the Vine wherewith it begins having perhaps been suggested by the sight of the vines which flourished so luxuriantly on the lower slope of Mount Olivet. But it rules out this view that, as the Evangelist expressly affirms (cf. xviii. 1), it was not until the discourse was ended that they quitted the city and, crossing the ravine of the Kidron, took their way to the Garden. And so it has been thought that after bidding the Eleven "arise and go thence" our Lord may have lingered a while longer in the Upper Room, continuing His discourse, and the parable might then have been suggested by a vine growing on the outer wall and trailing its branches over the window (cf. Ps. cxxviii. 3). Improbable as the fancy is, it is surely preferable to the reckless theory which assumes that chapters xv-xvii have been accidentally misplaced and should stand in chapter xiii, either between ver. 35 and ver. 36 or in the middle of ver. 31, thus making the quitting of the city (xviii. 1) follow immediately the quitting of the Upper Room (xiv. 31): "'Arise, let us go hence.' When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron."

This is to cut the knot rather than untie it, and it is in truth a mutilation of the narrative. Consider the situation as the Evangelist states it. Their further communing was held betwixt the withdrawal of our Lord and His disciples from the Upper Room and their betaking of themselves to Gethsemane. The scene was thus somewhere in the city; and where it was is so obvious that the Evangelist had no need to define it. It was the court of the Temple, our Lord's constant resort whenever He sojourned at Jerusalem. A place of public resort, it was daily

thronged with worshippers who lent an eager ear to His teaching ; but now when every family was within doors engaged in the celebration of the Paschal Supper, it was deserted, and nowhere else could He have found so quiet and secure a retreat. Nor is positive evidence lacking. The chief marvel of the Temple which King Herod the Great had built with lavish expenditure and that passion for imposing architecture which was a foible of his dynasty, was the adornment of the Sanctuary—a wreath of golden vines above the doorway with clusters, as Josephus tells, a man's stature in length. It was a world's wonder, and the pagans, as Plutarch and Tacitus testify, supposed that, since the vine was his emblem, the Jews were worshippers of Bacchus. When our Lord, so abruptly as it seems, began His discourse with the announcement " I am the True Vine," He was standing with the Eleven in the silent court with that magnificent creation before them glistening in the clear moonlight.

I. THE PARABLE OF THE TRUE VINE

XV. I-10

1 *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.*

2 *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away : and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*

3 *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*

4 *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine ; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

5 *I am the vine, ye are the branches : He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit : for *without me ye can do nothing.*

6 *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

7 *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

8 *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit ; so shall ye be my disciples.*

9 *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you : continue ye in my love.*

10 *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love ; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.*

“**I**” SAYS our Lord, “ am the true ” or rather “ the real vine ” (cf. i. 9, iv. 23, vi. 32, vii. 28)—the reality which the vine symbolised. And what did the vine symbolise to Jewish minds ? In the ancient Scriptures it is an emblem of the nation of Israel, the vine which the Lord had brought out of Egypt

* Or, *severed from me.*

and planted in a goodly land and tended so lovingly (cf. Ps. lxxx. 8-16; Is. v. 1-7; Jer. ii. 21); but in the later Jewish literature it signified not Israel but Israel's Saviour, the Messiah, the ideal King of David's lineage, "a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots" (cf. Is. xi. 1), as it is written in the Rabbinical Paraphrase (Ps. lxxx. 15, 16): "O God of Hosts, turn now again; look from Heaven and see, and remember in mercy this vine; and the vineyard which Thy right hand hath planted, and the King Messiah whom Thou hast established for Thyself." And so, when our Lord, standing with the Eleven beneath that golden emblem, proclaimed Himself the Real Vine, He meant that all the precious hopes which it prefigured were fulfilled in Him.

See how He enlarges the ancient emblem and turns it into a parable. He was the vine, His Father the husbandman (cf. Mt. xv. 13), and His disciples the branches. The *raison d'être* of a branch is fruit-bearing; and where the husbandman finds a fruitless branch, he removes it, and where he finds a fruitful branch, he "purges" or rather "cleans" it—a husbandman's term, denoting either the weeding of soil (cf. Mt. xiii. 7) or, as here, the pruning of branches. In the original there is a verbal assonance which may be thus imperfectly reproduced: "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh it clean away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He cleaneth it, that it may bear more fruit." And these are the offices of the Heavenly Husbandman: the lopping off of unfruitful branches—vine-branches, observes St. Augustine, useless as timber for husbandry or carpentry (cf. Ezk. xv. 2-5), fit only for fuel (cf. Mt. iii. 10, v. 29, where see exposition)—and the pruning of the unfruitful. Of the former the Eleven had witnessed a terrible example in the case of their comrade Judas Iscariot, and it became them to be admonished by his unhappy doom. "Already ye are clean" not by their own merit but "by reason of the word which I have spoken unto you." What the sap of the parent stem is to the branch, this the Lord's word, His message of grace, is to the believer; and as the branch lives by union with the stem, so does the believer by union with Him. "Abide in Me, and I in you; for without Me (cf. i. 3)—apart from

Me," or, as the margin has it, "severed from Me, ye can do nothing."

Severed from Christ we can do nothing, but abiding in Him (1) what resources are ours! See what is written according to the true text: "If ye abide in Me, and My sayings abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall come to pass for you"—a condition, a command, and a promise. Alike by precept and by example our Lord inculcated on His disciples the blessed exercise of prayer, assuring them of its efficacy; but His assurance was never absolute. The condition is variously expressed—now "whatsoever ye shall ask *in My name*" (cf. xiv. 13, 14, xvi. 23, 24), again "whatsoever ye shall ask, *believing*" (cf. Mt. xxi. 22), and here "if ye abide in Me, and My sayings abide in you." Prayer is not getting our way but taking God's. It is the alignment of our wills with His; and when our wills are one with His, then whatsoever we desire will surely come to pass. And (2) what achievements are ours! "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit and prove My disciples" or, according to the better attested reading, "that ye bear much fruit. And ye shall prove My disciples." Even as it is by bearing much fruit that a branch proves its union with the vine and glorifies the husbandman, so is it that we prove our union with Christ, our true discipleship, and glorify God.

Fruitfulness is a painful achievement. It comes, according to the imagery of the parable, by the surgery of pruning, which is wrought for the most part by the sharp discipline of affliction. And, lest we should shrink from the ordeal, our Lord bids us recognise it as no wanton mutilation. The Father is the husbandman, and it is His hand, moved by love, that does the work. It was thus that He dealt with His Beloved Son, who in the days of His flesh was "made perfect through suffering" and has called us unto His fellowship. "Even as the Father loved Me, I also loved you: abide ye in My love," or, as the sentence may be construed, "even as the Father loved Me and I loved you, abide ye in My love." Our Lord was the manifestation of the Unseen Father, and His love is the revelation of the Father's heart; and by abiding in His love we abide in the

Father's. And how may we so abide? "If ye observe My commandments, ye shall abide in My love, even as I have observed My Father's commandments and abide in His love."

2. THE FULFILMENT OF THE DISCIPLES' JOY

XV. II-17

11 *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

12 *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

13 *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

14 *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

15 *Henceforth I call you not servants ; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth : but I have called you friends ; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*

16 *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain : that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

17 *These things I command you, that ye love one another.*

THOSE were stern and exacting requirements, but, proceeds our Lord, "these things have I spoken unto you" not to discourage you but "that My joy (literally "joy, My joy") may be in you, and your joy be fulfilled." Observe the contrast—"My joy," "your joy." Their joy was the natural joy of the human heart, created by pleasant circumstances and worldly delights ; and, sweet though it be, it is always incomplete and evanescent. But our Lord's joy, whether the phrase means the joy which He gives or the joy which dwelt in His own heart, is full and enduring. It does not destroy our natural joy : it "fulfils" it. It is the realisation of that blessedness which we crave but which we never find in earthly things alone. And what is the secret of it ? It is love. "This,"

says our Lord, repeating His "new commandment" (cf. xiii. 34), "is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I loved you." Where love is, everything is transfigured.

O what is this that in my heart is singing,
 Like sweet bird, caged there, carolling all day?
 O what is this such gladness to me bringing
 That life is bliss, and work is merry play,
 And round my steps lo! sunny flowers are springing
 As I go singing, singing on my way?
 O Love, glad Love!

It does not create a new world; it makes the old world new.

Love means sacrifice—the giving of oneself for others without stint or grudging, even to the "laying down of one's life for one's friends—his dear ones." Here our Lord glances forward to the Sacrifice which He would presently consummate when, because He so loved the world, He laid down His life, an offering for its sin. And if they would share His joy, His disciples must share this His love. "Ye are My friends—My dear ones," not "if ye lay down your lives," since it is seldom that we are called to this uttermost sacrifice, but "if ye do whatsoever I command you." The text of the original varies here. (1) "Whatsoever things" or "as many things as I command you"; (2) "The things which I command you"; (3) "the thing which I command you." The choice lies between the second and the third; and the latter is preferable—"if ye do the thing which I command you." And this may mean either if we observe His one, all-embracing commandment, that we love one another, or if we prove our love by facing loyally, as it presents itself, each sacrifice, be it little or great, which He requires. One step at a time. One duty is all that concerns us for the moment. "*Do the Duty which lies nearest thee*, which thou knowest to be a Duty! Thy second Duty will already have become clearer." Thus we are numbered with the friends of our Lord.

After His wont (cf. Mt. v. 48) He concludes His exhortation with a generous assurance of His confidence in the devotion of His disciples. And a very moving assurance it was in Jewish ears. Of old God was styled "the Lord" and His

people His "servants" or rather "slaves" (cf. Lev. xxv. 42; Pss. lxix. 36, xc. 13, 16, cv. 25); and it was the distinction of Abraham, "the Father of the Faithful," that he was known as "the Friend of God" (cf. 2 Chr. xx. 7; Is. xli. 8; Ja. ii. 23). And Jesus, thus asserting His oneness with God, had hitherto called Himself "the Lord" and His disciples His "slaves" (cf. Mt. x. 25; Jo. xiii. 16); but His atoning sacrifice, so soon to be accomplished, would institute a nobler relationship, and Abraham's privilege would belong to all His faithful disciples. "No longer do I term you 'slaves,' but I have spoken of you as 'friends.'" And in evidence thereof He was confiding to them His purposes and making known to them all that He had heard from His Father—the mystery of His Cross and Passion. It was a high and solemn trust that He was reposing in them, and they might well shrink from it, counting themselves unworthy of it and unfit for the ordeal; but He reminds them that they had not sought it for themselves: He had called them to it. "It was not ye that chose Me but I that chose you (cf. vi. 70, xiii. 18) and appointed you (cf. Heb. i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 11) that ye may go and bear fruit and your fruit may abide, that whatsoever ye ask the Father in My name He may give you." It was on His errand that they were going, and were they but faithful, they would in no wise lack the needful grace. The responsibility was His, not theirs; and their part was simply to observe His commandment—"that ye love one another."

3. THEIR INSPIRATION IN PERSECUTION

XV. 18-27

18 *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

19 *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own : but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

20 *Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you ; if they have kept my saying, they will keep your's also.*

21 *But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.*

22 *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin : but now they have no *cloke for their sin.*

23 *He that hateth me hateth my Father also.*

24 *If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin : but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.*

25 *But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.*

26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me :*

27 *And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.*

FROM His inculcation of mutual love our Lord passes to the hatred which, as they had already experienced, would be their portion in an unbelieving world. Should they wonder at it? Dare they shrink from it? "If the world hateth you, recognise that it hath hated Me before you."

* Or, *excuse*

It was no path of flowers
 That through this world of ours,
 Beloved of the Father, Thou didst tread;
 And shall we in dismay
 Shrink from the narrow way
 When clouds and darkness are around us spread?

The world's hatred was the seal of their discipleship. "If ye belonged to the world, the world would befriend," not merely "its own," but "its own property," literally "its own thing," not "its own people." Its hatred was the seal of their discipleship and the world's own condemnation. It was "for His name's sake" that they would be hated, and here lay the guilt of their persecutors. It is told that, when John Huss was bound to the stake at Constance in the year 1416 and his guards were about to kindle the faggots, a poor old peasant woman approached with a great faggot and would not be content till it was laid against him where its flame would scorch his flesh. "What wrong," he asked her, "have I ever done to thee or thine, that thou art so bitter against me?" "None," she answered; "but thou art a heretic, and in helping to kill thee I am doing God service. So may I save my soul alive." "*O sancta simplicitas*, O holy simplicity!" cried the martyr; "peradventure it may be for salvation to thee and me both." Her ignorance was her excuse. She knew no better, and perhaps her zeal though not her act was accepted.

Ah! let us hope that to our praise
 Good God not only reckons
 The moments when we tread His ways,
 But when the spirit beckons.

But the persecutors of our Lord and His Apostles had no such excuse. He had done among them "the works which none other had done," proving His divine commission; and in hating Him they were hating God. "They had no cloke, no excuse, for their sin." In scriptural phrase (cf. Pss. xxxv. 19, lxix. 4) "they hated Him without a cause"; for what could they allege against Him in justification of their hatred of Him (cf. viii. 46)?

It was indeed an inspiring thought for the disciples that in enduring the hatred of the world they were partakers of the sufferings of their Master ; but was there nothing else than hatred to be anticipated in a world which He had come to redeem and was sending them to win ? That would have been a cheerless prospect, and He proceeds to nerve them with a high hope and summon them to holy endeavour. Already in the Upper Room (cf. xiv. 16, 17, 26) He had given them the promise of the Advocate who would come in His room. He had told them there of one office which the Advocate would perform—how He would teach them all things and bring to their remembrance the words which they had heard from His lips while He was with them, but which at the moment they could not understand ; and now He tells them of another and wider office of the Advocate—His testimony to an unbelieving world. “ When (the chief authorities omit “ but ”) He is come, the Advocate whom I shall send you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He will testify of Me.”

Observe the rich significance of this sentence. (1) In the Upper Room our Lord had said : “ I will pray the Father, and *He will give you another Advocate* ” ; “ the Advocate, even the Holy Spirit which *the Father will send in My name* ” ; and here He says : “ the Advocate *whom I shall send you from the Father* ” or, as the phrase of the original (cf. i. 6) denotes, “ on the Father’s mission.” Thus He attests His oneness with the Father, His true deity. (2) With no less emphasis He affirms that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person and not merely, as was alleged of old in the idle controversy on “ the procession of the Holy Spirit,” a divine influence, “ proceeding from God ” as a word “ proceeds out of the mouth ” (cf. Mt. iv. 4, xv. 18 ; Eph. iv. 29) or as a river “ proceeds out of its source ” (cf. Rev. xxii. 1). Not only this unhappy inference but the further inference that by representing the Spirit as proceeding from the Father alone He disproves His own oneness with the Father, His true deity, is precluded when the abused phrase of the original is rightly rendered thus : “ the Spirit of Truth, which is coming forth on the Father’s mission.” Observe the purpose of the clause. Our Lord has just said “ When the Advocate is

come"; and to quicken the expectation of His disciples He hastens to add that the coming of the Advocate was no remote event; He was already on the way—"the Spirit of Truth, which is coming forth on the Father's mission." And observe a further attestation of the personality of the Holy Spirit. In Greek "spirit" is a neuter noun, and therefore we read "the Spirit of Truth, which (not "who") is coming forth on the Father's mission"; but immediately our Lord resumes the masculine: "*He*—the Advocate, the Spirit of Truth—will testify of Me."

The office of the Holy Spirit is to testify ("testify" and "bear witness" here represent the same word in the original) of the Glorified Saviour, discovering the grace of His revelation and winning the world to faith; and, our Lord tells His disciples, it was their office too. "He will testify of Me; and" not "ye also shall testify" but, since it is uncertain whether the verb in the original be indicative or imperative, either "ye also testify" or "testify ye also." It matters nothing which be preferred; for an affirmation were here a command. In simply placing before them their high office the Lord challenged them to fulfil it. And truly it was a moving appeal that He addressed to them. (1) He reminded them of their peculiar qualification for the task: "Ye have been with Me from the beginning" (cf. Lk. i. 2; Ac. i. 21, 22). Who could better testify of Him than the Eleven who had companied with Him all the three years of His earthly ministry, daily beholding His blessed face and hearing the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth? And the abiding lesson which emerges hence is that the primary and essential qualification of a preacher in all ages is a personal knowledge of the Saviour and a personal experience of the grace which he proclaims. And (2) in testifying of Him they would not be alone. Their testimony would be reinforced by the testimony of the Advocate. As they told of the Saviour's love and mercy, the Holy Spirit would pursue His ministry in their hearers' hearts, awakening them to a sense of their need and revealing to them, in Bunyan's phrase, "the want and worth of Christ Jesus to save them."

4. THE EXPEDIENCY OF OUR LORD'S DEPARTURE

xvi. 1-15

1 *These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.*

2 *They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.*

3 *And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.*

4 *But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.*

5 *But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?*

6 *But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.*

7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

8 *And when he is come, he will *reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*

9 *Of sin, because they believe not on me;*

10 *Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;*

11 *Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*

12 *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.*

13 *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

* Or, convince.

14 *He shall glorify me : for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

15 *All things that the Father hath are mine : therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

LEST it should take them by surprise and “make them stumble” (cf. Mt. v. 29, where see exposition) our Lord has been forewarning the Eleven of the persecution which awaited them in the prosecution of their mission, and nerving them by the thought that therein they would be treading the hard path where He had gone before them, and by the assurance of the Holy Spirit’s co-operation. And now, to dispel every fond illusion, He reiterates His forewarning in still plainer terms: “They will excommunicate you (cf. ix. 22, xii. 42); nay, an hour is coming that every one that killeth you shall fancy that he is offering worship”—the word elsewhere (Rom. xii. 1; Heb. ix. 1, 6) rendered “service,” “divine service”—“unto God.” So it came to pass. The Apostles were charged by the Jews with heresy and blasphemy; “Away with the atheists!” was the cry of the pagans, zealous for their idols, when they cast the Christians to the wild beasts in the arena; and the martyrs of ecclesiastical tyranny were doomed “to the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.” “These things have I spoken unto you,” says our Lord, “that, when their hour is come, ye may remember them, how that I told you.”

It was indeed needful that He should thus forewarn them; for hitherto, occupied mainly with their instruction in “the mysteries of His Kingdom,” He had dwelt little on the sufferings which awaited them, contenting Himself with incidental premonitions whereof, obsessed as they meanwhile were by their Jewish anticipation of a Messianic triumph, they had taken slight account (cf. Mt. v. 10, 11, x. 17–26). “These things,” says He, “I told you not”—not “from the beginning” (cf. xv. 27) but, as the phrase of the original here (cf. vi. 64) signifies,—“ever since the beginning,” in a constant, unbroken stream of admonition. Their immediate need had been ever His concern, and while He was with them, passing hints of the

future as occasion arose had sufficed ; but now that He is leaving them He plainly apprises them of the imminent ordeal.

The double announcement of His departure and their ensuing conflict dismayed the Eleven ; and He remonstrates with them for their shortsightedness, their perception of the immediate calamity and their obliviousness of the larger issue. Because He had spoken these things unto them, sorrow had filled their heart ; and they never considered whither He was going nor what infinite profit would thence accrue. This He now sets before them. " I tell you the truth : it is expedient (cf. xi. 50) " or, as the word is elsewhere (Mt. v. 29, 30, xviii. 6) translated, " profitable for you that I should go away." And herein lay the profit of His departure—that it was the condition of the coming of the Advocate and the inception of His larger and more beneficent ministry. And the reason is very plain. The Incarnation of our Lord, His clothing of Himself with mortal flesh, His submission to the circumstances of our frail humanity, while the supreme revelation, was nevertheless at the same time a limitation of His grace. Imagine that He had continued still from age to age a man among men : then even as in the days of His flesh He would be evermore fixed to one locality ; and wherever He might have His earthly abode, He would be remote from other lands, and their inhabitants, that they might reach Him and see His blessed face, hear His gracious voice, and feel the touch of His kind hand, must needs travel far and wearily over continents and oceans, and at the end would hardly have obtained access to Him for the multitude thronging and pressing about Him. " Therefore He declares a change of administration—that the Christ of the eye is to be withdrawn, and the Spirit, an invisible, diffusive, pervasive, everywhere present, always-abiding Christ substituted—a Christ whom no distance can remove, whom the sick man can have in his chamber, the prisoner in his dungeon, the exile in his place of banishment, the martyr in his fires ; present to the heart, more present than looks or words ; present where the eye is blind and cannot see Him, and the ear is deaf and cannot hear Him speak."

The Holy Spirit is the Successor of our Lord, but be it

observed that He is not a second Saviour. There is but one Saviour, and His work was finished when He offered Himself on the Cross, a full and final Sacrifice for the sin of the world. And when He went away, the Holy Spirit came in His room not to complete His work but to testify of Him, discovering to sinners their need of Him, emboldening them to accept His offer and rest on His mercy, and leading them into an ever closer fellowship with Him and an ever deeper experience of His inexhaustible grace. "When He is come, He will" not "reprove" but "convict (cf. iii. 20, viii. 46) the world, bring the truth home to the world"; and that in three particulars: (1) "Concerning sin"—not sin in general but "because they believe not in Me." They rejected the Saviour in their ignorance, "because they did not recognise the Father nor Him" (ver. 3); and when the Holy Spirit's testimony brought home to them who He was, then they would realise the enormity of their crime.

I saw One hanging on a tree
In agonies and blood,
Who fixed His languid eyes on me
As near His cross I stood.

Sure never till my latest breath
Can I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with His death,
Though not a word He spoke.

(2) "Concerning righteousness, because I go unto the Father, and ye no longer behold Me." This is the only passage in St. John's Gospel where the word "righteousness" occurs, and it signifies here the righteousness of God in His dealings with men. In view of abounding wrong, the suffering of the innocent and the prosperity of the wicked, it was an ancient question, debated of old by prophets and psalmists, whether there were indeed a righteous government of the world. "How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?" It seemed as though the crucifixion of our Lord were a monstrous triumph of wrong; but the discovery that, though He had passed from human sight, He had gone to the Father and was reigning evermore at His right hand, vindicated the moral order

of the universe. (3) "Concerning judgment, because the Prince of this world (cf. xii. 31, xiv. 30) hath been judged," His Crucifixion was sin's condemnation of Christ; His Resurrection was God's condemnation of sin.

Thus our Lord adumbrates the ministry of the Advocate. Significant as every sentence is, it was but a meagre outline, and He explains His reticence on so momentous a theme. "I have many things to speak unto you, but ye cannot bear them at present" or more precisely "ye cannot *carry* them at present"—the word elsewhere used of a man "bearing a pitcher of water" (Mk. xiv. 13), of our Lord "bearing His cross" (Jo. xix. 17) and His disciples "bearing their crosses after Him" (Lk. xiv. 27), of His "bearing our sicknesses" (Mt. viii. 17), and of our "bearing one another's burdens" (Gal. vi. 2). And so our Lord here recognises that further discourse on the Advocate's work would meanwhile have been unintelligible to the Eleven, and so far from relieving their burdened minds would rather have increased their perplexity. Experience would enlarge their comprehension and illumine what was now dark to them. "When He is come, the Spirit of Truth, He will guide you into all the truth," as a guide leads a blind man (Mt. xv. 14), as a shepherd guides his flock (Rev. vii. 17), as a teacher guides a learner (Ac. viii. 31). This is a gracious office of the Holy Spirit. See how largely and profoundly our Lord now defines it. The Holy Spirit, though a Divine Person commissioned by the Father, brings no revelation; for in Christ a full and final revelation has already been vouchsafed for all time (cf. Col. ii. 3), and the Holy Spirit's office is to glorify Christ by illumining the truth which He has revealed and guiding us to an ever larger perception and understanding thereof. And even as our Lord in the days of His flesh had not spoken "from Himself," "of His own initiative" (cf. vii. 17, 18), but testified the things which He had heard from the Father, so, He says, the Holy Spirit "will not speak from Himself, but whatsoever things He heareth He will speak; and" not "He will shew you things to come" but "the things that are coming (those many things which our Lord would fain have spoken had they been able to bear

them) He will report to you." Observe that word "report." It is the word which is used in the original, for example, where it is written (Ac. xiv. 27, xv. 4) that Paul on returning with Barnabas from his first mission "rehearsed" or "declared all that God had done with them." And even as they thus brought back a report from those far lands, so would the Advocate bring a report to the disciples—tidings of their Risen and Ascended Lord and His thoughts and purposes. "He will glorify Me; for He will take of Mine and report it unto you." And, He adds, reaffirming His own true deity, a report of Him was a report of God. "All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine. Therefore said I that He taketh of Mine and will report it unto you."

5. BRIEF SORROW, LASTING JOY

xvi. 16-24

16 *A little while, and ye shall not see me : and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.*

17 *Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me : and again, a little while, and ye shall see me : and, Because I go to the Father ?*

18 *They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while ? we cannot tell what he saith.*

19 *Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me : and again, a little while, and ye shall see me ?*

20 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice : and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*

21 *A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come : but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.*

22 *And ye now therefore have sorrow : but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.*

23 *And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.*

24 *Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name : ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

AGAIN (cf. xv. 26) our Lord assures the Eleven that the coming of the Advocate was no remote event. It would ensue hard after His departure. "A little while," He says according to the authentic text, "and ye no longer behold Me; and again a little while, and ye will see Me" (the addition "because I go to the Father" is a scribal interpolation from next verse). Observe here a significant antithesis, obliterated in our Version. When our Lord says "Ye no longer behold Me," He employs a verb denoting in the original a spectacle which catches the eye and fixes its gaze (cf. ii. 23, vi. 19 R.V.); whereas "see" in the second clause is the verb which specially denoted spiritual vision, a supernatural appearance invisible to the eye of sense (cf. Mt. v. 8, xvii. 3; Lk. i. 11, 22; Ac. ii. 17). Hence it is as though He had said here: "A little while, and ye no longer have Me before your eyes; and again a little while, and ye will have a vision of Me." He was about to pass from their sight, but He would presently manifest Himself unto them. And what was His reference? Surely He had immediately in view His post-resurrection manifestations to His disciples. His language implies this. "Have not I *seen* Jesus our Lord?" says St. Paul (1 Cor. ix. 1), referring to his vision on the road to Damascus. And again (xv. 5-8): "He *was seen* of Cephas . . . He *was seen* of above five hundred brethren at once . . . He *was seen* of James . . . He *was seen* of me also." But the promise was in no wise limited to those immediate manifestations, and still less to His final and remote appearing in glory at His Second Advent (cf. Mt. xxiv. 30, xxvi. 64). He is speaking here not merely of some particular manifestation but of the continual realisation of His presence which His disciples would evermore enjoy under the dispensation of the Advocate (cf. Mt. xxviii. 20).

And not for signs in heaven above
Or earth below they look,
Who know with John His smile of love,
With Peter His rebuke.

He is evermore visible to faithful souls in His operations.
The peace which comes by believing in His name is the light

of His blessed face ; the love which comforts our sorrows is the touch of His healing hand ; and in every life made beautiful by His grace He is incarnate.

The seeming paradox bewildered the disciples ; and several of them—evidently including the Evangelist, since he was privy to their thoughts—engaged in a whispered colloquy. Had He said merely “ A little while, and ye do not behold Me,” they would have recognised it as an intimation that He was about to leave them and, as He had already told them (cf. ver. 10), go home to the Father. And had He added simply “ and again ye will see Me,” they would have understood it as a repetition of His promise in the Upper Room (cf. xiv. 1-3) that He would welcome them home to the Father’s House when the time came for them to follow Him thither. But He added “ and again a little while, and ye will see Me.” It was His reiteration of the phrase “ a little while ” that puzzled them. For it seemed as though it meant that they were to follow Him presently ; and how could this be if they were to continue after His departure and prosecute their earthly mission ? “ What is this that He saith, ‘ a little while ’ ? We know not what He is speaking of.”

“ Jesus perceived that they were wishing to question Him ” ; and, aware what their thoughts were, He answered their unspoken appeal by explaining His promise “ again a little while, and ye shall see Me.” It was a promise not of speedy reunion in the Father’s House but of earthly fellowship with Him their Risen and Glorified Lord, a joy which would come to them amid their sorrow by realisation of His continual presence. Already the previous night, as He sate with them on Mount Olivet discoursing of things to come, He had bidden them be of good cheer amid the impending distress, since “ all these things were but the beginning of travail-pangs ” (Mt. xxiv. 8, where see exposition), the pains attending the birth of a nobler order ; and now He amplifies that profound epigram into a parable of a woman’s pain in her hour of travail and her joy when she is delivered. “ She no longer remembereth the anguish for the joy that a man is born into the world.” So would it be with the disciples ; and the promise was indeed

fulfilled in "a little while." For is it not written (cf. xx. 20) that on the evening of His resurrection-day, when He came and stood in their midst, "the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord"? And "their joy none took away from them." It still abides in every heart which knows by blessed experience that the dear Lord who dwelt here long ago, is no mere historic memory but a Living Presence, gracious as of old in Galilee and Jerusalem, and far nearer, so near that He is unseen by mortal eye and unheard by mortal ear; for "closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

Our Lord exemplifies the closeness of the heavenly communion which His disciples would enjoy in the new era, by the larger efficacy wherewith prayer would then be invested. Here He employs two words which unfortunately are both alike translated "ask" in our Version. In the first instance the word of the original signified properly "put a question," "interrogate" (cf. i. 19, 21, 25, v. 12, viii. 7, ix. 2, 15, 19, 21, xvi. 5, 19, xviii. 19, 21), and, accordingly for "ask Me nothing" the Revisers have here in their margin "ask Me no question." But in later Greek the word bore also the generally colloquial sense of "crave," "beg," "entreat" (cf. iv. 31, 40, 47, xii. 21, xiv. 16, xvii. 9, 15, 20, xix. 31, 38); and so it means here. "In that day ye will entreat Me for nothing." There will then be no need of entreaty, of eager and anxious importunity; and the reason appears when our Lord proceeds, according to the authentic text: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if ye ask anything of the Father, He will give it you in My name." And what does this mean? "In reading the last half of the 16th chapter of John," wrote Edward Irving in his journal (Sabbath, 20th November, 1825), "I was struck with the 23rd and 24th verses, which show us why the Lord's Prayer was not concluded in Christ's name (cf. Mt. vi. 13, where see exposition) because He was not Intercessor and High Priest till after His death. In the days of His flesh He had no mediatorial power, but was conquering it to Himself and His Church; and therefore He called upon them to rejoice that He was to go away." To pray "in His name" is not merely to ask for things according to His will but to plead the merit of His atoning sacrifice for the sin

of the world which for ever ratified the sinner's acceptance with God ; and until that sacrifice was offered it was impossible to plead its merit. Its accomplishment on Calvary established a new relationship between God and the world ; and now, when we pray "in Christ's name," we no longer "entreat" ; we "draw near with boldness unto the Throne of Grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need"—covenanted mercy, assured grace, "purchased and promised blessings."

O wondrous love ! to bleed and die,
To bear the cross and shame,
That guilty sinners, such as I,
Might plead Thy gracious Name.

Therefore said our Lord to the Eleven on the eve of His final sacrifice : "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name : ask," more precisely "be asking, keep asking, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled (cf. xv. 11)—may be a fulfilled joy." Realise, He means, your new standing before God, and appropriate your blood-bought heritage.

6. CONCLUSION OF THE DISCOURSE

xvi. 25-33

25 *These things have I spoken unto you in *proverbs : but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in *proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.*

26 *At that day ye shall ask in my name : and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you :*

27 *For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.*

28 *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world : again I leave the world, and go to the Father.*

29 *His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no †proverb.*

30 *Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee : by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.*

31 *Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe ?*

32 *Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to §his own, and shall leave me alone : and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.*

33 *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world.*

OUR Lord has been endeavouring throughout His discourse to the Eleven, first in the Upper Room and then in the silent court of the Temple, to fortify them against the imminent tragedy by lifting their thoughts forward to the ensuing felicity. It was a difficult task, since the conditions of the nobler order which His departure and the coming of the Advocate would inaugurate, were so novel and unprecedented that only by analogies and parables could He convey to their

* Or, *parables.*† Or, *parable.*§ Or, *his own home.*

minds any idea thereof. By the bewilderment of their frequent questionings they had evinced their irreceptiveness ; and He closes with a kindly reassurance. As He has already told them that after His departure the Advocate would bring to their remembrance all that He had said unto them and would guide them into all the truth (xiv. 26, xvi. 13), so here, "An hour is coming," says He, "when no longer in parables (cf. x. 6, where see exposition) shall I speak unto you, but in plain terms shall I tell you tidings of the Father." There would then be no occasion for parables, since the high truths which He was now seeking to convey, would then be revealed to them by actual experience. Thus He makes generous allowance for their present dullness. It may have disappointed Him, yet He was not angry nor even impatient with them. "In that day," says He, resuming what He had just said of prayer, "ye will ask in My name ; and I say not unto you that I shall entreat the Father for you." What need of entreaty then, when His Infinite Sacrifice would have won them peace with God and removed every barrier to the outflowing of His love ? "I say not unto you that I shall entreat the Father for you. For the Father Himself is your friend, and ye have been My friends (cf. xv. 14, 15) and have believed that I came forth on the Father's mission (cf. xv. 26)."

And so He concludes His long discourse with the plain announcement wherewith He had begun it (cf. xiv. 2, 3) : "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world : again I am leaving the world and am going unto the Father." Whatever else they might have missed, if they grasped only this, it would suffice for their encouragement. Nor did they miss it ; and they gladly responded, as though ashamed of their dullness and eager to assure Him that at last His words had not fallen on uncomprehending ears. Perhaps one of them voiced their thoughts, and the others assented ; and surely the spokesman, then as so often (cf. Mk. xiv. 31), would be the generous and impulsive Peter. But since, according to the authentic text, the Evangelist wrote simply "His disciples say" (without "unto Him"), it may rather be that we have here not a single speech but a chorus of acclamations. "See," cried one, "now

Thou art speaking in plain terms and telling no parable." "Now," said another, acknowledging His claim to have come forth from the Father, "we know that Thou knowest all things." "And," added a third, confessing the freeness of His love, "Thou hast no need that any one entreat Thee." "Herein," said a fourth, "we believe thou camest forth on God's errand."

These were large protestations; and, sincere though they were and well intended, they grieved the Master, knowing as He did how soon and how sadly they would be belied. "Behold, an hour is coming, yea hath now come, that ye shall be scattered each to his own quarter (cf. i. 11, where see exposition) and shall leave Me alone." It was not His own desolation that He had in view, since even in the hour of their desertion He would not be alone: the Father would be with Him. His concern was all for them—His "little flock," scattered like sheep when the shepherd has fallen (cf. x. 12). And therefore it was that He had spoken His sad foreboding—that, when it came to pass, "in Him they might have peace," remembering how He had foreseen their disloyalty yet had loved them still. And the memory would be their unfailing reassurance in every dark hour. "In the world ye have anguish (cf. ver. 21); but courage! I have conquered the world."

OUR LORD'S PRIESTLY PRAYER (xvii)

I. FOR HIMSELF

xvii. 1-5

1 *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come ; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee :*

2 *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

3 *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

4 *I have glorified thee on the earth : I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*

5 *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

THAT ringing sentence of good cheer, " Courage ! I have conquered the world," was the close not only of His discourse on the night of His betrayal but of all His teaching of His disciples during His earthly sojourn with them. He was now done with them, and He turns to God. He did not, like the publican in the Temple (Lk. xviii. 13), bow His head in humble contrition but " lifted up His eyes to heaven," the silent, starlit sky and the infinitude beyond. " There is something," remarked F. W. Robertson, " in the mere posture of looking up which gives a sense of grandeur ; and that, I suppose, is the reason why all nations have localised heaven there, and peopled the sky with Deity." The hour had come—the fateful hour which He had so long anticipated (cf. iv. 21, 23, vii. 30, viii. 20, xi. 9) and ever, as it approached, with a keener apprehension of the anguish which it would bring (cf. xii. 27, xiii. 1, xvi. 32). But now He thinks not of the ordeal but of its issue.

"Father," He prays, "glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee." It was not an entreaty but an assured claim; and see the ground of His confidence. It was twofold.

1. *His Divine Commission.* He had been entrusted by God with an errand of mercy to "all flesh," that is, in Biblical language, the race of weak and sinful humanity. It was God's work, and God would bear Him through it. "Glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee, even as Thou gavest Him authority over all flesh, that whatsoever Thou hast given to Him, He may give to them life eternal." Not "immortality," observe, but "life eternal"; and, says Amiel, "the eternal life is not the future life; it is life in harmony with the true order of things,—life in God." Otherwise immortality were no boon but a perpetuation of the ills that flesh is heir to, a heavy doom, a thing for prudence to shudder at. "It would be terrible," said that vile Pope, Leo X, "to believe in a future life. Conscience is an evil beast, which arms man against himself." Our Lord's mission was to "all flesh," and He brought for all God's gift of eternal life (cf. Rom. vi. 23), but it belonged only to such as received it. Observe how largely this solemn truth is here proclaimed: "Thou gavest Him authority over all flesh, that whatsoever Thou hast given to Him" or more literally "all that which Thou hast given to Him, He may give to them life eternal." The Father's gift to the Son was not, thus far, "all flesh" but, according to His historical method of redemption, an elect community ("all that which," not "all those whom"), and the condition of admission thereto was personal and individual acceptance ("to them," not "to it") of His offer of eternal life. It was indeed at the moment a small community, but inasmuch as it was a community of witnesses, it was an earnest of a larger and ever larger gift in store. "This," says He, "is the eternal life"—the "life eternal" whereof He has just spoken—"that they (not merely "know" but) get to know" or "recognise Thee, the only real (cf. iv. 23, where see exposition) God, and Him whom Thou didst commission, even Jesus Christ." Eternal life is life in God, and we must know God that we may live in Him. Nor is it enough merely to know God, for the knowledge of God, as the Scriptures proclaim, is

instinctive in the human breast, and even the heathen knew Him, however darkly, by the testimony of conscience and the evidence of His works (cf. Rom. i. 20, 21). It is not enough merely to know God ; we must know Christ too (cf. xiv. 1, where see exposition). For only in Christ is He truly known ; only in His Eternal Son Incarnate do we know the Eternal Father. " Seek the Lord and His face continually :—" wrote Oliver Cromwell to his son Richard, 2nd April, 1650, " let this be the business of your life and strength : and let all things be subservient and in order to this ! You cannot find nor behold the face of God but in Christ ; therefore labour to know God in Christ ; which the Scripture makes to be the sum of all, even Life Eternal." And thus it was a word of high expectation that our Lord spoke when He prayed : " This is the eternal life that they get to know Thee, the only real God." He was anticipating the future when by the double testimony of the Advocate and His disciples from age to age (cf. xv. 27) ever more and more would " get to know " Him until " all flesh had seen His salvation."

2. *His Finished Work.* Observe our Lord's designation of Himself as " Him whom Thou didst commission, even Jesus Christ." It is indeed nothing novel that He should speak of Himself thus in the third person ; for in the course of His earthly ministry He habitually styled Himself " the Son of Man," expressing His fellowship with the poor and lowly (see exposition of Mt. viii. 20), and often simply " the Son," proclaiming His relationship to the Father (cf. Mt. xi. 27 ; Lk. x. 22). It would have been nothing strange if, as He said at Cæsarea Philippi (Mt. xvi. 13) " Who do men say that the Son of Man is ? " He had said here " the Son whom Thou didst commission " ; but His designation of Himself as " Jesus Christ " is unparalleled and at the first glance very strange, insomuch that it has been suggested that all He actually said was " Thee and Him whom Thou didst commission " and that " the only real God " and " even Jesus Christ " are explanatory amplifications by the Evangelist. But this were in truth a grievous impoverishment of the passage. Realise the situation. Our Lord's ministry was done, and with the Eternal Glory in

sight He was reviewing His earthly sojourn and His earthly toils. In manhood how remote and alien childhood appears !

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
Say, could that lad be I?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye.

Give me again all that was there,
Give me the sun that shone !
Give me the eyes, give me the soul,
Give me the lad that's gone !

And—reverently be it said—even so and with more reason it seemed to our Blessed Lord at the close of His earthly career. The frail humanity which He had worn while He dwelt here, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, was but a temporary disguise veiling His proper glory ; and now that it is slipping from Him, He thinks of the part which He had played—the name which He had borne among the children of men and the office which He had performed. He was done with all that now. He had played His part and was Himself again—no longer “ Jesus Christ,” Jesus the Messiah, the Promised Saviour, but the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father.

His work was done—His earthly service, in theological phrase, His “ active obedience ” ; and herein He had glorified God. “ I glorified Thee ”—not “ I have glorified Thee ” ; for it was now a thing of the past—“ on the earth by accomplishing (cf. iv. 34, v. 36) the work which Thou hast given Me to do.” He had not merely “ finished ” but “ accomplished ” or, as the word is elsewhere (cf. ver. 23 ; Phil. iii. 12 ; Heb. ii. 10, v. 9, vii. 19, 28 marg., ix. 9, x. 1) rendered, “ perfected ” it. And who else has ever made a like claim ? Who else, even the holiest of the children of men, has faced the end with the assurance that he had glorified God ? It is told of Pope Pius IX, a true man of God and sorely tried, that on his death-bed, being addressed as “ most holy Father,” he exclaimed : “ What ! ‘ Most holy Father ’ ? I am a poor sinner.” And who else than our Blessed Lord has ever claimed at the close that he had accomplished his work ? H. T. Buckle had attained middle life

when, after twenty years of patient labour, he published his famous *History of Civilization in England*. It was merely a sketch of the work which he had planned, and he went abroad to gather strength for the continuance of his task; but he sickened of fever at Damascus and died there, and almost his last words were: "My book, my book! I shall never finish my book!" "Looking all the facts in the face," wrote G. J. Romanes during his last illness, "I do not expect ever to see another birthday, and therefore, like Job, am disposed to curse my first one. For I know that all my best work was to have been published in the next ten or fifteen years; and it is wretched to think of how much labour in the past will thus be wasted."

It is ever thus with the children of men; but our Lord faced the end with neither shame nor disappointment. He had glorified God and accomplished His work. In the world's sight indeed the latter claim had no justification; for it seemed as though His ministry were closing in premature disaster. The disciples whom He had won were, on His own confession (Lk. xii. 32), but "a little flock," feeble and despised. Galilee had been the chief scene of His labour, and He had departed thence with a heavy condemnation of her faithless cities wherein most of His mighty works had been done (cf. Mt. xi. 20-24; Lk. x. 13-15); and but the other day He had wept over the obduracy of Jerusalem and her impending doom (cf. Lk. xix. 41-44). Yet where the world saw only failure, He saw accomplishment; for (1) here as ever He recognised the Father's sovereign purpose. Observe what He says—not "My work" but "the work which Thou hast given Me to do." He would fain have accomplished more, and it grieved Him that so few had "believed His report"; but, little though it seemed, He had accomplished His appointed task, and therefore He was well content. And (2) He looked beyond "the present, bleak and bare," to the future fruition, the harvest of the seed which He had sown; and He saw His brief ministry advanced from age to age by His disciples under the guidance and inspiration of the Advocate who should come in His room (cf. xiv. 12). He had accomplished His "work"—His "active obedience," but His earthly mission was not thereby fulfilled. There still

remained His "passive obedience," His suffering, His sacrificial death which would win forgiveness for the world and a crown of glory and honour for Himself (cf. Heb. ii. 9). Only this now lay between Him and the glory which He had left for a season "when He from His lofty throne stooped to do and die." And here He addresses Himself to the ordeal. "I glorified Thee on the earth by accomplishing the work which Thou hast given Me to do ; and now," He prays, claiming His requital, "glorify Thou Me, Father, by Thine own side with the glory which I had, ere the world was, by Thy side."

2. FOR THE ELEVEN

xvii. 6-19

6 *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world : thine they were, and thou gavest them me ; and they have kept thy word.*

7 *Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.*

8 *For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me ; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.*

9 *I pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me ; for they are thine.*

10 *And all mine are thine, and thine are mine ; and I am glorified in them.*

11 *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.*

12 *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name : those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition ; that the scripture might be fulfilled.*

13 *And now come I to thee ; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.*

14 *I have given them thy word ; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

15 *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*

16 *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

17 *Sanctify them through thy truth : thy word is truth.*

18 *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*

19 *And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be *sanctified through the truth.*

ONE and indeed the chief task of our Lord's earthly work was the instruction of His Apostles, the manifestation to them of God's "name," that is, His character, His thoughts and purposes and, as the Westminster Divines have it, "whatsoever there is whereby He makes Himself known." This task He had accomplished, and now He proudly and lovingly presents the Eleven at the Throne of Grace and dedicates them to the service for which He had prepared them and of which they had proved themselves worthy. "I manifested"—not "I have manifested," since this also (cf. ver. 4) was an accomplished task, a thing of the past—"Thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world." See how He characterises them. (1) They were God's elect, chosen by Him out of the world for a high and holy service, not for their own sake but for the world's. (2) They were the Father's gift to His Son—a sacred and precious trust committed to His charge. "Thine they were, and to Me Thou gavest them; and (3) they have observed Thy Word—Thy Message." Here is the evidence of their election. The heavenly message was not lost upon them. They heeded it and laid it to heart. And thus (4) they attained to ever deeper understanding and larger faith. "Now have they recognised that all things as many as Thou hast given to Me, are from Thee; for the sayings"—the particulars of the "Word" or "Message" (ver. 6)—"which Thou gavest to Me, I have given to them, and they on their part received them, and recognised truly that on Thy mission came I forth (cf. xv. 26), and believed that Thou didst commission Me."

Those men, the Eleven who surrounded Him as He thus prayed, were now His supreme and engrossing concern. "It is for them that I entreat (see exposition of xvi. 23). It is not for the world that I entreat, but for those whom Thou hast given to Me." At the first hearing these are indeed

* Or, *truly sanctified*.

startling words, and none that ever fell from our Lord's lips have been more grievously misconstrued. Two widely diverse interpretations have been put upon them.

(1) They were taken in former days as a "proof-text" of a rigid and pitiless doctrine of predestination. "He openly denies," wrote Calvin, "that He prays for the world, because He is careful only for His own flock which He has received from the Father's hand"; adding that, whereas we are indeed bidden as Christians to pray for all men, the reason is that meanwhile we cannot, like our Lord, distinguish the elect from the reprobate, and our duty is therefore to pray for all and leave to God's judgment the doom of such as He knows to be reprobate. Suffice it to observe that were this a just interpretation of our Lord's words here, it would be a stark contradiction of other testimonies of Holy Scripture. Is it not written in the record of His interview with Nicodemus at the beginning of His ministry (cf. iii. 16) that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish"?

(2) It has been alleged in modern times, particularly by Renan, that in the apparent contrast between that early testimony to the worldwide love of God and our Lord's mission of universal redemption and this declaration of His on the eve of His betrayal, where He seems to limit His solicitude to His little band of followers, we have an evidence of His disillusionment, the quenching by chill experience of the ardent hope which He had entertained at the outset of His ministry. The young prophet had embarked on His career with a radiant vision of the love of God and the high possibilities of humanity. He imagined that His message had only to be proclaimed to be enthusiastically welcomed, and He dreamed of winning the world. But presently He had a rude awakening. Like every enthusiast since time began He quickly learned how irresponsive is the mass of mankind to lofty ideals and how wedded to stubborn prejudices. Gradually His generous ardour cooled, until at the last He despaired of "a vile race" and solaced Himself with the reflection that, though He had failed to win the world, He had won a band of disciples who

would not suffer the light which He had kindled to be extinguished after He was gone.

It were hard to determine which of these diverse interpretations is the more alien from scriptural testimony and the more offensive to Christian faith ; nor is the truth far to seek. Reading on, what do we find (cf. vers. 20-23)? First our Lord explains that when He said " It is for them that I entreat," He had in view not merely the Eleven who were about Him at the moment nor yet merely the rest of the disciples whom He had won during the three years of His ministry, but all whom they should win after His departure and all who to the end of time should believe His blessed Gospel. Then He specifies what His prayer was for these His believing people in all ages. It was that they might be one—one with each other by their common union with Him and, through Him, one with the Father. And lastly He defines the ultimate purpose of His prayer—"that the world may believe that Thou didst commission Me."

Hence it appears wherefore it was that on the night of His betrayal He prayed not for the world but for those whom the Father had given Him. He was not putting the world aside ; in truth it was the world that He was thinking of and caring for all the while. When he left His eternal glory and came down here in mortal weakness, it was to redeem the world and offer the Infinite Sacrifice which has procured pardon for every sinner of mankind who will receive it. That was the errand on which He came, the work which the Father had given Him to do ; and He had it stedfastly in view at every step of His earthly journey. But He recognised that His time was short and the winning of the world was not His task. When He had made a full atonement for the sin of the world, then His mission was accomplished ; and the task of proclaiming His salvation to the world was reserved for the men whom He had chosen for this high office. He had come not to preach the Gospel but that there might be a Gospel to be preached ; and the preaching of it when He was gone was their task. They were His instruments for the winning of the world ; and therefore it is that He prayed for them—not because He cared for them alone, but that they

might be strengthened for so great a work. It was just because He loved the world that He thus prayed for them and not for it.

Our Lord's prayer for the Eleven, the men whom the Father had given Him out of the world, is a resignation of the trust committed to Him; and His comfort in the hour of parting was that He was surrendering them into no alien hands. They were dear to Him, but they were no less dear to the Father; and by their requital of the pains which He had expended on them, they had proved themselves worthy of the Father's regard. "They are Thine; and all My things are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I have been glorified in them." And now that He must leave them in the world, bereft of His companionship, His prayer is that the Father should still have them in His sight. Here the authentic text runs: "Holy Father, keep" or rather "observe"—the word elsewhere (cf. Mt. xxvii. 36) rendered "watch"—"them in Thy name, in terms of Thy name, which Thou hast given to Me." The Father's name signifies His divine character which our Lord had manifested to the Eleven (cf. ver. 6). And so the argument here is that since the Father was holy, He would not belie His name: He must needs be true to his character. "Holy Father, keep a watchful eye upon them (cf. Ps. xxxii. 8), true to Thy name which Thou hast given to Me, that they may be one, even as we"—literally "one thing," one community (cf. ver. 2), a united flock, not "scattered (cf. xvi. 32) like a crowd of frightened sheep."

The Father owed it to His own name to keep watch over His own; and He owed it also to our Lord who in His name had hitherto watched over them, faithfully discharging the trust which He was now restoring. "While I was with them (the chief authorities omit "in the world"), I was watching them, true to Thy name which Thou hast given to Me; and I guarded them, and none of them was lost (cf. Mt. xv. 24, xviii. 11; Lk. xv. 4, 6, 8, 9, 24, 32)" or, as the word is elsewhere (cf. iii. 16; Mt. viii. 25, xviii. 14) rendered, "perished." Would that He might have ended there, bringing His flock home, "no wanderer lost"! But alas! one was gone—Judas, "the son of perdition" (cf. 2 Th. ii. 3) or rather "loss," the cognate noun

of the preceding verb. It is a Hebrew phrase. "A son of Belial" or "wickedness" was one whose very nature is depraved, steeped in wickedness and delighting in it; "a son of death" (2 Sam. xii. 6 marg.) was one deserving death; "a son of light" (cf. Lk. xvi. 8) was one who loved the light, finding in it his congenial atmosphere. And so "a son of loss" signified a wastrel. Apparently our Lord is here recalling the churlish protest which had assailed Mary's lavish offering the previous Sunday evening at the supper at Bethany (cf. Mt. xxvi. 8; Mk. xiv. 4): "To what purpose is this waste—this loss?" It was Judas who had voiced it (cf. Jo. xii. 4), resentful of the loss of an opportunity for pilfering from the common store and oblivious all the while of the loss of his own soul (cf. Lk. ix. 25). "None of them was lost but the son of loss, that the Scripture might be fulfilled (cf. xiii. 18)." On Jewish lips "Is it not written?" was an appeal to the providential purpose of God; and this was our Lord's consolation—that the treason of Judas was a fulfilment of the Father's purpose (cf. Mt. xxvi. 24, 54).

What need was there that He should thus bespeak the Father's care for His disciples, since they were the Father's no less than His (cf. vers. 9, 10), and dear to the Father even as to Himself? In truth His prayer was not a supplication. Now as ever in the days of His flesh He was unburdening His heart in loving communion with the Unseen Father; and not merely so, but, as in His prayer by Lazarus' grave (cf. xi. 41, 42), by taking the Eleven with Him into the Heavenly Council-chamber He was revealing to them the Father's purpose, that they might share His own confidence in prospect of the trials which awaited them. "These things am I speaking in the world that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves (cf. xv. 11)." And with this gracious end in view He proceeds to define His desire and the Father's purpose concerning them. (1) It was not that they should be exempted from the ordeal but that they should be brought safely through it (cf. 1 Cor. v. 10). "I am not entreating that Thou take them out of the world but that Thou keep them watchfully out of the grasp of the Evil One (cf. Mt. v. 37, where see exposition)." (2) Like Himself, though in the world, they were not of it, and He was not leaving them unequipped

for the conflict. He had given them the Father's Word (cf. ver. 14), not a written book but the message which He had brought from Heaven, the truth which He had revealed. "Consecrate them in the truth: Thy Word is truth." And (3) how could they flinch, remembering their high vocation? "Even as Thou didst commission Me to the world, I also commissioned them to the world" (cf. xx. 21). He was passing on to them the mission which God had entrusted to Him, and surely they would address themselves thereto with a devotion like His own—that devotion whereof He was even then showing the supreme example in freely giving Himself up to death. "It is for their sake that I am consecrating Myself, that they too may be consecrated" not "through the truth" but "in truth"—with a true, whole-hearted consecration.

3. FOR HIS DISCIPLES IN ALL AGES

xvii. 20-26

20 *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word ;*

21 *That they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us : that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

22 *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them ; that they may be one; even as we are one :*

23 *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

24 *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me : for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*

25 *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee : but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.*

26 *And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it : that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

THUS our Lord prayed for the men whom the Father had given Him out of the world, the Eleven who were about Him as He prayed and the other disciples whom He had won during His earthly ministry ; but these were not His exclusive concern. "It is for them that I entreat" He had said (ver. 9). "But," He now adds, "it is not for them only that I entreat, but also"—according to the authentic text—"for those that believe through their Word in Me." It might seem at the first glance as though He meant here merely the converts whom the Eleven and their fellows would win after His departure ; but observe what "their Word" signifies. It is not

simply their preaching during the few short years of their further sojourn in the world. It is "the Word which He had given them" (cf. ver. 14), the Message which He had brought them from Heaven and which they would transmit to their successors from generation to generation. And when He says, not "those that shall believe," but "those that believe," the future is present in His view.

Thus He prays here for all His disciples to the end of time ; and what is His prayer for them ? (1) "That they all may be one" literally (cf. ver. 11) "one thing," a single, unbroken, undivided community (cf. ver. 2). Nay more (ver. 23) : "that they all may be perfected" or "accomplished (cf. ver. 4) into one"—not loose, scattered stones but "a building fitly framed together" (Eph. ii. 21). (2) The pattern of the unity of believers is the unity of the persons of the Blessed Trinity : "that they all may be one, even as Thou, O Father, in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be in us." (3) Its secret is their common fellowship with Christ and with the Father through Him : "I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one." And how is this fellowship attained ? "The glory," He says, "which Thou hast given Me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one." And what does this mean ? His glory was the glory which He won by suffering and death (cf. vii. 39, xii. 16, 23 ; Heb. ii. 9) ; and He gives His disciples the glory which the Father has given Him, by calling them to "the fellowship of His sufferings" (Phil. iii. 10). And (4) the supreme end of the unity of believers is the winning of the world : "that the world may believe that Thou didst commission Me" ; "that the world may believe that thou didst commission Me, and lovedst them even as Thou lovedst Me."

Observe the ideal of the Church's unity which our Lord here presents when He likens it to His own oneness with the Father. There is diversity in the Godhead, since fatherhood and sonship have their divine archetypes in the sacred mystery of the Trinity ; yet the Eternal Father and the Eternal Son are one in thought and purpose, so truly one that to see the Eternal Son Incarnate was to see the Eternal Father (cf. xiv. 9). And it is thus that our Lord would have His people

one, each retaining his proper character yet all imbued with a common spirit and commending to the world a common Saviour. It is unity but not uniformity. Sin reduces men to one dead level ; but grace employs all diverse gifts and develops individual aptitudes, making each the man that God means him to be. Hence there is room in the Church for endless diversity, and she approximates to her divine ideal in proportion as she comprehends all phases of thought and service in the household of a common faith. The revelation of God in Christ is infinite and inexhaustible. No human definitions can ever compass the boundless truth ; and therefore doctrinal finality and sectarian exclusiveness are nothing less than denials of the unity of the Spirit, and an increase of tolerance, a widening of sympathy, is a necessary fruit of "growth in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." As the years pass, it is well if, while we reverently cherish the old traditions, recognising how much we owe to the heritage whereunto we were born, denominational distinctions be growing ever less important to us, and our hearts warm more and more to all good men who love the Lord and seek the peace of the world for which His precious blood was shed, in the spirit of the Apostle (Eph. vi. 24) who pronounced a benediction of grace on all who "love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

The secret lies in recognising what the Church truly is. She is the community of the faithful, all throughout the world, whatsoever their denomination, who call Jesus Lord and share the grace of His Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. xii. 3). It is His presence that constitutes the Church, according to that fragrant sentence of St. Ignatius in the epistle which he wrote to the Church of Smyrna on his way to martyrdom : "Wherever Christ Jesus may be, there is the Catholic Church." Like this is the saying of St. Irenæus of Lyons in the second century : "Where the Church is, there also is the Spirit of God ; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace." And worthy to be written therewith in letters of gold is a saying of Alexander Peden, "the Prophet," in the days when God's saints were scattered and hunted on the

Scottish moors and mountains: "It is wherever there is a praying man or woman at a dykeside—that is where the Church is." It is the death of intolerance and of the strife and bitterness which it breeds when the lordship of Christ and the communion of His grace are acknowledged; and a fine example hereof is Dean Ramsay's anecdote of John Skinner (1721–1807), Episcopalian clergyman of Longside in the diocese of Aberdeen, a classical scholar and author of several Scottish songs. Passing with a friend by a "meeting-house" while the worshippers were singing a psalm, he reverently bared and bowed his head. "What!" exclaimed his companion; "do you feel so much sympathy with this Anti-burgher congregation?" "No," answered the old man, too leal a Scot to harbour bigotry; "but I respect and love any of my fellow-Christians who are engaged in singing to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ."

And now our Lord concludes His prayer, as He had begun it (cf. ver. 5), by lifting His thoughts to the glory which awaited Him—the glory which had been His by the Father's side ere the world was, which He had resigned when He came down here to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows, and whither He was now returning, enriched with the fruits of His redeeming Sacrifice. "O Father," He cries—not merely "Father"; for here (cf. ver. 21) the address is, according to the idiom of the original, an impassioned appeal, characteristic of these closing verses where His emotion attains its climax. Observe the broken construction of the sentence as it stands in the authentic text: "O Father, what Thou hast given to Me (cf. ver. 2), My will is that where I am they also may be with Me (cf. xii. 26, xiv. 3), that they may behold My glory—the glory which Thou hast given to Me because Thou lovedst Me ere the foundation of the world." That glory He does not claim for Himself, since it was indefeasibly His; but He claims its participation for His disciples. He does not ask it for them; He claims it, forasmuch as He had won it for them: "My will is." Fain would He have made a wider claim, and for a moment He mourns the unbelief of the world and the scantiness of its response to His appeals. His emotion is hidden

in our Version's rendering of His language here. It is a broken sentence, like the bewildered question of Judas Lebbæus in the Upper Room (xiv. 22): "Lord—and what hath come to pass?" Even so says our Lord here: "O righteous Father—and the world did not recognise Thee." It is almost a sob; but immediately He checks it, falling back on the righteous Father's unerring will. They were indeed few that He had won out of the world, but so the Father had ordained; and the Father's purpose was large and would be accomplished in due season. "The world did not recognise Thee; but I recognised Thee, and these"—the men whom the Father had already given Him out of the world—"recognised that Thou didst commission Me." And therefore was He content. His disciples had recognised His divine mission, and He had charged them with its continuance after His departure (cf. ver. 18). He had declared to them the Father's name—His character and purposes, and through the ministry of the Advocate (cf. xiv. 25, 26, xvi. 13, 14) He would still declare it to them and their successors from generation to generation, making them by His indwelling presence witnesses to the Father's redeeming love.

ARREST IN THE GARDEN

xviii. I-II

1 *When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.*

2 *And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place : for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.*

3 *Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.*

4 *Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye ?*

5 *They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.*

6 *As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.*

7 *Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye ? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.*

8 *Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he : if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way :*

9 *That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.*

10 *Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.*

11 *Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath : the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ?*

WHEN He had done communing thus with them and with God, our Lord and the Eleven quitted the Temple and took their way through the silent city to their nightly retreat, the Garden or Orchard of Gethsemane on the western slope of Mount Olivet (see exposition of Mt. xxi. 17-22), passing as they went "over the brook Cedron." So our Version has it, but the true rendering of the original is "the winter-torrent of the cedars." And this is the Septuagint Version's phonetic representation of the Hebrew name where it occurs in the Old Testament (cf. 2 Sam. xv. 23; 1 Ki. ii. 37, xv. 13; Jer. xxxi. 40). The Hebrew is *nahal kidron*, where *kidron* is not a proper name but an adjective, signifying "dark," "turbid," or "blackish" as it is rendered in the Book of Job (vi. 16) where we read of a stream "blackish by reason of the ice." And *nahal* was not a "brook" but a "winter-torrent" or *wady* as it is termed in Arabic nowadays in the Holy Land—a watercourse dry in summer but flooded in the springtime by the rain and the melting snow of Hermon and Lebanon. Such a watercourse there was in the deep ravine between the Temple-mount and the Mount of Olives. It is known now as *Wady en Nar*, "the Watercourse of Fire," since it is like a very furnace in the blistering heat of summer; but of old it was known as *Nahal Kidron*, "the Dark Watercourse." Greek-speaking Jews, like the Alexandrian translators of the Old Testament, catching merely the sound, construed the name as "the Winter-torrent of the Cedars"; and so the ravine was designated in our Lord's day when the Common Greek was the general language.

It was an unfortunate designation, since it suggested to minds unfamiliar with the locality a pleasant stream—a "brook," as our Version has it—shadowed by cedar-trees, and concealed the dramatic purpose of the Evangelist in mentioning the obvious circumstance that on His way with the Eleven from Jerusalem to Gethsemane our Lord passed "over the Dark Winter-torrent." What was it that made it dark and turbid? It was the blood of the sacrificial victims which was drained into the ravine from the altar in the Temple-court; and it seemed prophetic to the Evangelist that, as the Lamb of God passed over it on this fateful night, the torrent, full fed by the

winter-rain, was running dark with the blood of the thousands of paschal lambs which had been slain that afternoon.

It is to St. John that we owe this impressive touch ; and, true to his design (cf. Introduction, p. xxix), he omits the story of our Lord's Agony in Gethsemane already so largely narrated by his predecessors (cf. Mt. xxvi. 36-46 ; Mk. xiv. 32-42 ; Lk. xxii. 40-46), and tells immediately of the Arrest. At least six hours had elapsed since the traitor had withdrawn from the Upper Room on his unholy errand (cf. xiii. 30) ; and our Lord had apprehended his speedy reappearance with the Sanhedrin's minions. Therefore it was that He had so early quitted the Upper Room and betaken Himself with the Eleven to the Temple-court, that He might finish His communing with them (cf. xiv. 31). And why is it that Judas was so long in reappearing ? This the Evangelist indicates when he defines so precisely the retinue which now attended him. It was composed not merely of the emissaries of the Sanhedrin, " officers from the Chief Priests and the Pharisees " (cf. Mt. xxvi. 47 ; Mk. xiv. 43), but of—not " a band of men " but—" the cohort " (cf. vers. 3, 12 R.V. marg.), that is, the Roman garrison stationed at the Castle of Fort Antonia to preserve order during the Feast when the city was crowded with visitors. Of course it was merely a detachment of the cohort that accompanied Judas. This is all that is meant by his " receiving the cohort "—a phrase much like our " bringing out the military " or " summoning the police." Here is the reason of the delay. The traitor's errand would have been quickly accomplished had the Jewish authorities been at liberty to act alone. They would at once have despatched their officers with him to effect the arrest ; but they durst not without the Roman Governor's permission execute a measure so likely to excite commotion, and they had to wait upon him and solicit his sanction. He granted it, but to ensure order he fetched a detachment of soldiers from the Castle to accompany the expedition.

Judas acted as guide and conducted the troop to the retreat which he knew so well. A Roman captain was in command, but it lay with the Sanhedrin's officers to make the arrest, and he and his soldiers were there merely to see it duly effected.

Observe how by his parenthetical note that "Judas His betrayer was also standing with them" the Evangelist takes account of the preliminary incident of the traitor's kiss as related by his predecessors (cf. Mt. xxvi. 47-50; Mk. xiv. 43-46; Lk. xxii. 47-49). He had thought to keep in the background when he had done his part in conducting the troop to the spot, but the captain's uncertainty on finding twelve men where he had expected only one compelled him to come into the open and expose his villainy to his Master and comrades. It was after this shameful rencontre that the captain bade the Sanhedrin's officers make the arrest, and as they approached, our Lord asked them: "Whom are ye seeking?" "Jesus the Nazarene" they answered in terms of their mandate; and, emotional Orientals as they were, very unlike their comrades for the nonce, the cool and disciplined Roman soldiers, it is nothing strange that, as He advanced to surrender Himself, they should have "retreated backward and fallen on the ground," prostrating themselves before Him. For they knew Jesus, and their minds were ill at ease. They were the very men who some six months previously (cf. vii. 32, 45, 46) had been deputed by the Sanhedrin to watch their opportunity for arresting Him as He taught in the Temple-court, and had returned empty-handed, pleading that "never man so spake." The impression which He had then made upon them had deepened during the interval, and in their hearts they were half believers. It was an odious task that had now been imposed upon them; and their reluctance was uncontrollable when they confronted Him and heard His well remembered voice.

No wonder they were moved. For His question "Whom are ye seeking?" had a gracious intention and its accents would recall the tender appeals which they had heard from His lips in Jerusalem. What its intention was they learned when, rallied by the unsympathetic soldiers, they presently recovered, and He repeated it. "Jesus the Nazarene" they again faltered. And then He disclosed what He meant by craving a favour of them—not for Himself but for the Eleven. "I told you that I am He; so," said He, solicitous to the last for the men whom the Father had given Him (cf. xvii. 12), "if it be I that ye are

seeking, let these go their way." His generous solicitude on their behalf touched the terrified disciples and awoke in their breasts an answering devotion. Simon Peter, impulsive as ever, drew the sword which, anticipating such an emergency, he had worn that evening beneath his mantle (cf. Lk. xxii. 38, where see exposition), and falling upon the Sanhedrin's officers as they were pinioning the dear Master struck from behind at the head of the nearest and, missing it, slashed the lobe of his right ear. All the Evangelists relate the incident (cf. Mt. xxvi. 51-54; Mk. xiv. 47; Lk. xxii. 50, 51), but St. John alone mentions the victim's name. It was Malchus, and he was "the slave (not merely "servant") of the Chief Priest"—not Caiaphas the acting Chief Priest but that more important personage, Annas the Chief Priest *emeritus*, since he belonged to the latter's domestic establishment (cf. ver. 26). He was a confidential retainer of old Annas and had probably been deputed to conduct the troop with the prisoner to his palatial residence on Mount Olivet. Without staying to repeat how the soldiers were restrained from instant reprisal by our Lord's healing of Malchus' wound St. John reports His significant rebuke of His impetuous disciple: "Thrust (cf. xx. 25, 27) the sword into the sheath. The cup which the Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (cf. Mt. xxvi. 39, 42). It was indeed more than a rebuke. It was an admonition of the Eleven to rally their courage by recognising what was befalling as God's appointment, the Father's will.

HIS TRIAL (xviii. 12-xix. 16)

I. BY THE JEWISH RULERS

xviii. 12-27

12 *Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,*

13 *And led him away to Annas first ; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.**

14 *Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.*

15 *And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple : that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.*

16 *But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.*

17 *Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples ? He saith, I am not.*

18 *And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals ; for it was cold : and they warmed themselves : and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.*

19 *The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.*

20 *Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world ; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort ; and in secret have I said nothing.*

21 *Why askest thou me ? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them : behold, they know what I said.*

22 *And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus †with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so ?*

* *And Annas sent Christ bound unto Caiaphas the high priest, ver. 24.* † *Or, with a rod.*

23 *Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil : but if well, why smitest thou me ?*

24 *Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.*

25 *And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples ? He denied it, and said, I am not.*

26 *One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him ?*

27 *Peter then denied again : and immediately the cock crew.*

IT was the dead of night when our Lord was arrested, and since the Sanhedrin could not legally convene until daybreak, our Lord, as we have seen (cf. exposition of Mt. xxvi. 57), was conducted from Gethsemane to the residence of Annas, the Chief Priest *emeritus* (cf. exposition of Mt. xxi. 23), situated hard by on the slope of Olivet, that the interval might be usefully employed in His examination by the astute veteran, in order to expedite His formal trial before the Sanhedrin under the presidency of the acting Chief Priest Caiaphas. It was the beginning of the end, and the Evangelist pauses to point out how the unconscious prophecy of Caiaphas a few weeks previously (cf. xi. 49-52) was thus finding its fulfilment.

In the scuffle which followed Peter's assault on Malchus the Eleven had been dispersed, and had fled for their lives (cf. xvi. 32 ; Mt. xxvi. 31, 56 ; Mk. xiv. 27, 50) ; but presently two of them rallied from their panic—Simon Peter and "another disciple," meaning John (cf. Introduction, p. xxviii). They followed to the entrance-gate of the mansion, which was opened to the guards and their prisoner and then closed. No others had the right of entry, but it is written that John was "known unto the High Priest" and the portress let him pass into—not "the palace" but—"the courtyard." Peter had no such credential, and he was shut out. There he must have remained, but John spoke on his behalf to the portress, and she opened the gate and admitted him too.

Is not this a surprising incident? John was a fisherman from the Lake of Galilee, and he was known at Jerusalem only as a follower of one who had incurred the displeasure of the rulers and had just been arrested on a charge of heresy and sedition. What intimacy was possible between him and so exalted a dignitary as Annas, the head of the Jewish hierarchy? The question has been long debated; and one suggestion is that John belonged to a priestly family and thus, though only a Galilean fisherman, may have been a kinsman of the Chief Priest. But this is a pure fancy, and the probable explanation is far simpler and more significant. It was furnished long ago by a forgotten scholar named Nonnus and belonging to Panopolis in Upper Egypt. He was born and bred a pagan, and his early fame rested on his poem the *Dionysiaca*, a monumental work in forty-eight books dealing with mythology and archæology. On his conversion to Christianity he devoted his learning to its service. His ambition was to commend his new faith to his old associates and win the intellect of his age for Christ. He was no preacher or controversialist but a studious man of letters, loving retirement; and here he found a rare opportunity. The New Testament, being written in the Common Greek, the unliterary vernacular of the period, made no appeal to literary taste; and so, about the year 400, Nonnus executed a metrical Paraphrase of St. John's Gospel in the form of a classical epic. Its poetic merit is indeed slight; but it exhibits much literary skill, and it possesses this abiding value for Christian students—that it preserves not a few traditional elucidations of obscure passages.

Here is an instance. "There followed in His path at a distance"—so runs his paraphrase of the passage before us—"Simon and another young comrade who, being well known from his craft of fish-catching to the famed Chief Priest, went running in Christ's train into the courtyard." See what this means. Ere the Lord called him John had been a fisherman at Capernaum, and the Galilean fishery was a thriving industry. The Lake swarmed with fish which, by reason of their excellent quality, were in large request. They were preserved at Taricheæ, "the Pickleries," and exported far and wide. Thence the

market of Jerusalem was supplied, and the demand was especially brisk during the Passover-season when the city was crowded with worshippers. In this extensive industry John had all his life been engaged with his father Zebedee and his brother James, and in a large way since they had "hired servants" in their employment (cf. Mk. i. 20). Certainly they would do business at the capital; and here lies the explanation of the Apostle's acquaintance with the High Priest. He was no stranger at the mansion on Mount Olivet, since he had often presented himself at its gate in the way of trade. The portress knew him well; and what wonder that she admitted him on that eventful night and at his request let his mate pass with him into the courtyard?

And what wonder that he remembered the incident and counted it worthy of mention in his peerless story? It would be to him in after years a rebuke of discontent and a discovery of the precious use of lowly toil faithfully performed. For who that had known him in his early days, a fisher-lad with toil-worn hands and weatherbeaten face, launching out evening by evening and rowing ashore in the morning with his glittering spoil or sitting in his boat mending his nets, could have anticipated the career which lay before him? And how must he have felt during those early days of obscurity? Genius is a divine gift, and it stirs in a breast where God has implanted it, struggling for realisation and, where cabined and cribbed by unpropitious circumstances, beating like a captive bird against the bars of its cage. Think of that fisher-lad, conscious of his latent powers yet doomed, as it seemed, to handle oars and nets all his days. How his soul would fret at its limitations and sigh for an opportunity to spread its wings and escape into a larger and nobler air! Yet he gave himself quietly to his lowly toil; and his opportunity came when he met the Lord and was called to leave all and follow Him and aid in the ministry of His Heavenly Kingdom. Perhaps during the three years of his companionship with the Master he looked back regretfully on his early days, counting them barren and unprofitable and questioning why so much of his life had been wasted; but on that tragic night he made a discovery. His employment during those wasted years,

as he had deemed them, had all the while been serving a precious end. For it was "his craft of fish-catching" that opened to him the Chief Priest's gate that he might attend the dear Lord in His uttermost need and prove to Him that there was one loving heart which remained faithful in that dark hour.

It was courageous of the two disciples to follow their Master into the courtyard, since they ran the risk of arrest as His accomplices; but had Peter foreseen what awaited him, he would have stayed outside. (On Peter's denials see exposition of Mt. xxvi. 34.) As he entered, the portress, in the freshness of her surprise at finding her acquaintance John in such company, good-naturedly asked him: "Art thou also one of this fellow's disciples?" Had he simply assented, he would, like John, have experienced no further annoyance; but the question alarmed him, and after his impulsive fashion he blurted out a denial and hurried into the courtyard. Late though it was, the household of Annas was all astir, and since there was an unseasonable chill in the atmosphere—a premonition of the approaching earthquake (cf. Mt. xxvii. 51), a charcoal brazier had been kindled in the open courtyard and the domestic servants and the officers of the Sanhedrin were gathered round it; and Peter joined the group with an ill assumed air of nonchalance.

Meanwhile our Lord was within doors undergoing examination. It would be a protracted business, but it was conducted in private and nothing is recorded save the incident which terminated it and which the Evangelist probably learned from the two officers of the Sanhedrin who were present as the prisoner's guards and who, already impressed, may have subsequently joined the ranks of His disciples. Annas questioned Him regarding His disciples and His teaching, and our Lord, impatient of an inquisition which had no other design than the prejudice of subsequent proceedings in the Court of the Sanhedrin, answered that all this was common knowledge. He was no secret propagandist. "Question those who have heard what I spake unto them. See," said He, pointing to the attendants, "these men know what I said." Hereupon a bystander, thinking to curry favour with the tyrant, dealt Him a buffet on the face (cf. Mt. v. 39, where see exposition) for what he was pleased to

deem insolence to the Chief Priest. It was not merely desecration of a legal tribunal but gross cowardice thus to assail a pinioned prisoner; yet it incurred no rebuke from Annas despite our Lord's quiet and dignified protest.

Herewith the precognition ended, since it was now near daybreak when the Court of the Sanhedrin would convene; and "therefore Annas" not "had sent" but "sent Him away bound unto Caiaphas the High Priest." What had been happening meanwhile in the courtyard? The story of Peter's encounter with the portress had spread, and as he stood warming himself at the fire, the idle servants and officers, observing his discomposure, employed themselves in making sport of him. "Art thou also one of his disciples?" they asked him. Had he admitted it on entering, he would have heard no more of it. It was that initial denial and his manifest alarm that prompted his tormentors. "A wilful falsehood told," says Thomas Fuller, "is a cripple not able to stand by itself, without some to support it; it is easy to tell a lie, hard to tell but a lie." And so Peter found it. His first denial had committed him, and he now perforce repeats it. It happened that one of the domestics was a kinsman of Malchus, and though it is unlikely that he had actually witnessed the assault in Gethsemane inasmuch as, not being an officer of the Sanhedrin, he had no business there, he had heard the story and bluffed the terrified victim: "Did not I see thee in the Garden with him?" Observe how generously the Evangelist deals here with his comrade's shame. He writes merely that "again Peter denied; and immediately" not "the" but "a cock crew"; whereas his predecessors dwell upon the scene. St. Matthew (xxvi. 74) and St. Mark (xiv. 71) tell how he asseverated it with a curse and an oath, and St. Luke (xxii. 61) explains that, while the courtyard was echoing with the blasphemy, the Lord was passing on His way to the Court of the Sanhedrin, and not only did the shrill clarion from an adjacent steading check Peter's frantic lips by recalling to him the forewarning in the Upper Room (cf. xiii. 38) but the reproach of that gentle face broke his heart.

St. John merely mentions that after His examination by Annas our Lord was conducted to Caiaphas for His formal trial

before the Court of the Sanhedrin in its chamber, the Hall of Hewn Stone, within the Temple-precincts. It was there that He was pronounced guilty of blasphemy and sentenced to death in terms of the Jewish law; and the reason why no account is given here of the momentous proceedings is that they have already been amply recorded by the other Evangelists (cf. Mt. xxvi. 57-68; Mk. xiv. 53-65; Lk. xxii. 63-71).

2. BY THE ROMAN GOVERNOR (xviii. 28-xix. 15)

(I) PRESENTATION OF THE CASE

xviii. 28-32

28 *Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto *the hall of judgment : and it was early ; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled ; but that they might eat the passover.*

29 *Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man ?*

30 *They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.*

31 *Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death :*

32 *That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.*

THE Sanhedrin had found our Lord guilty of blasphemy—a capital crime according to Jewish law ; and of old He would forthwith have been stoned to death (cf. Ac. vii. 54-60). But in those days the Jews were vassals of Rome, and ere a capital sentence could be carried out it must be submitted to the Imperial Procurator, and in the event of its receiving his sanction it was executed according to the Roman method of crucifixion (cf. exposition of Mt. xxvii. 31-37). Hence it is that now “ they lead Jesus from Caiaphas unto ” not “ the hall of judgment ” but “ the Prætorium,” the Procurator’s official residence at Jerusalem (cf. marg.), a magnificent edifice, formerly the palace of King Herod the Great. “ It was,” the Evangelist significantly observes, “ early ”—the word elsewhere rendered “ in the morning ” and defined as indeed very early by St. Mark when he writes (i. 35) “ in the morning, a great while before day,” and again by St. John when he writes (xx. 1)

* Or, *Pilate’s house*, Mt. xxvii. 27.

“early, when it was yet dark.” What time would it be? It was about 3 a.m. at the first flush of dawn that the Sanhedrin had met (cf. exposition of Mt. xxvi. 57); and since its procedure had already been determined by the precognition of Annas, it would be quickly despatched, and now it would scarcely be later than 4 o’clock. This was an untimeous hour even in the East, where business was conducted early ere the heat of the day set in; and in ordinary circumstances they would have delayed their visit to the Prætorium for at least a couple of hours. Indeed in ordinary circumstances they would have postponed proceedings entirely until the Holy Week was ended (cf. Ac. xii. 3, 4); but their eagerness to compass our Lord’s destruction would brook no delay, and they were bent on pushing the case through.

It was easy for them to have their way. For the Procurator at that time was Pontius Pilate, and since his misgovernment had placed him at their mercy (cf. exposition of Mt. xxvii. 11–26), they might use what liberties they would with him. See how cavalierly they treated him. Not merely did they summon him thus early from his couch, but since to enter a heathen dwelling would have rendered them ceremonially unclean and incapacitated them meanwhile for hallowed offices, “they would not themselves enter into the Prætorium, that they might not be defiled but might eat the Passover.” Here arises an ancient and abiding question. Had not the Sanhedrists, like our Lord and His disciples, already on the previous evening “eaten the Passover” in the sense of the Paschal Supper? Such is the representation of the earlier Evangelists; but here it would seem as though they still had the Holy Supper before them and intended celebrating it that evening. Hence it is argued by critics who deny the authenticity of our Gospel and account it a religious romance of the second century by an unknown author, “giving expression to his deep ideas in the form of a life of Jesus,” that the Evangelist has represented the Supper in the Upper Room as not the Paschal Supper at all but merely the last evening meal which on the previous evening our Lord and His disciples ate together before He suffered. And the purpose of this manipulation of the historical facts was to

create a symbolic coincidence by making our Lord's death on the Cross at 3 p.m. on the Passover day synchronise with the sacrifice of the paschal lambs at the altar in the Temple (cf. xix. 36 with Ex. xii. 46, Num. ix. 12).

The argument is indeed ingenious, but is it reasonable? It ignores the obvious consideration that, though the Sanhedrists would have contracted defilement by entering the Prætorium, this would in no wise have prevented their eating the Paschal Supper that night. For ceremonial uncleanness lasted only until evening (cf. Deut. xxiii. 11), and by due ablution at the close of the day they would have been qualified to eat the Supper. Thus it is written in the Talmudic directory for the celebration of the Passover that "a mourner," defiled by contact with the dead, "is at liberty to partake of the paschal lamb that very evening after he has washed." What then was the reason of their scruple? The phrase "eat the Passover" denoted not merely participation in the Paschal Supper which they had already celebrated the previous night, but participation in all the business of the Holy Week, especially the feast of thanksgiving (*chagigah*) on the afternoon of the day succeeding the Supper. Hence their refusal to enter the Prætorium that morning. The defilement thus contracted would have continued until the evening, and they would thereby have been excluded from the feast of thanksgiving in the afternoon.

So they sent in their message to Pilate; and chafing at the indignity, he came forth to the gateway and, standing on the *Gabbatha*, the tessellated landing of the stairway (cf. xix. 13), he there gave them audience (cf. Ac. xxi. 35, 40). The sight of the fettered prisoner told him their errand, and with ill concealed resentment he demanded what the charge against "this fellow" was. His brusquerie provoked them, and by way of bringing him to heel at the outset they answered him in kind: "If 'this fellow' were not an evil-doer, we would not have delivered him up unto thee." Still holding out, "Take him ye," he cried impatiently, "and judge him according to your law." Observe their retort: "It is not allowable for us to put any one to death." It was at once a rebuke of Pilate who should have recognised that only a capital sentence duly

pronounced by the Jewish court would have been referred to him, and an intimation that they would stand no trifling : they had passed sentence of death on the prisoner, and they would have it ratified. And here the Evangelist points out the fulfilment of our Lord's premonitions of the manner of His death (cf. xii. 32, 33 ; Mt. xx. 19). Had the Jewish rulers been free to execute their own sentence, He would have been stoned, but since it was the Procurator's judgment that determined His doom, He was executed after the Roman manner by crucifixion.

(2) EXAMINATION BY PILATE

xviii. 33-38a

33 *Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews ?*

34 *Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me ?*

35 *Pilate answered, Am I a Jew ? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me : what hast thou done ?*

36 *Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world : if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews : but now is my kingdom not from hence.*

37 *Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then ? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*

38a *Pilate saith unto him, What is truth ?*

THERE was nothing for it but that Pilate should take up the case. The Sanhedrists presented to him, evidently from the sequel in writing, their formal indictment which St. Luke's diligence has preserved (xxiii. 2) : " This man we found perverting our nation, and hindering the giving of tribute to Cæsar, and saying that he is himself Messiah, a King." Observe here their unscrupulous manipulation of the case. The Sanhedrin had convicted Him of blasphemy—a capital crime under Jewish law ; but since Roman law took no cognisance thereof, they altered it to a charge of sedition. Thus construed it was an indictment which the Procurator durst not ignore ; and bidding the guards conduct the prisoner thither, he withdrew to the judgment-hall of the Prætorium and there examined Him.

It was the first time they had ever stood face to face ; and the very look of Him, so gentle and withal weary with the ordeal of the past night and bearing the traces of His rough handling in the Court of the Sanhedrin (cf. Mt. xxvi. 67, 68), was enough, in the Procurator's judgment, to discredit the idea that He was a wild revolutionary aspiring to the throne of Israel. "Thou!" he exclaimed—"art thou 'the King of the Jews'?" Such was the charge in the indictment which Pilate held in his hand, but our Lord had not heard it. The Sanhedrin had condemned Him as a blasphemer, and He wondered if His adversaries had indeed stooped so low as to pervert the Hope of Israel into a political offence and on that score arraign Him for treason against the heathen tyrant. "Is it," He asked, "of thine own initiative that thou art saying this, or did another tell it thee of Me?" The question stung the Procurator, conscious as he was of ignoble subservience to the Sanhedrists' menaces. "Am I a Jew? It was thine own nation," said he, displaying the indictment, "and the Chief Priests that delivered thee unto me. What didst thou?" Our Lord answered by explaining the nature of His Kingdom. It was not a worldly kingdom, and it was a sufficient evidence hereof that His arrest in Gethsemane had been so quietly effected without a struggle on the part of Himself and His followers. "As it is, My Kingdom belongeth not here." "Then," said Pilate, "thou art a king?" "Yes" He answered, and proceeded to explain what manner of sovereignty He claimed. "For this have I been born and for this have I come into the world—to testify unto the Truth." And all lovers of the Truth were His subjects. Ah, now Pilate understood. He was familiar with this sort of talk. Was it not a Stoic aphorism that the Wise Man is a King? And had not Plato said that states would never be happy unless their kings were philosophers or philosophers were entrusted with the government? Plainly the prisoner was no dangerous sedition-monger but an idle visionary, a harmless enthusiast. "What is Truth?" he laughed.

(3) CHRIST OR BARABBAS?

xviii. 38b-40

38b *And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.*

39 *But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover : will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews ?*

40 *Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.*

“**W**HAT is Truth? said jesting Pilate; And would not stay for an Answer.” Indeed he needed none; for he was satisfied of our Lord’s innocence, and leaving Him in the judgment-hall he strode forth across the courtyard to the gateway and, standing on the Gabbatha, announced to the expectant rulers in the street the result of his examination of the prisoner: “I find in him no fault.” Here, since the episode has already been fully related by the earlier Evangelists (cf. Mt. xxvii. 15-26; Mk. xv. 6-19; Lk. xxiii. 13-25), St. John after his wont (cf. Introduction, p. xxix) abridges the narrative. The declaration of the prisoner’s innocence should have been followed by His acquittal, but Pilate quailed before the frowns and protests of the Sanhedrists. He durst not defy them and do justice at all hazards; and he was about to yield and save himself by sentencing an innocent man to death when the rabble came surging up to the gateway claiming their privilege of obtaining the release of a prisoner; and here Pilate perceived an opportunity of outwitting the Sanhedrists. See exposition of Mt. xxvii. 15-26. Observe that the appearance of the rabble on the scene lies between ver. 38 and ver. 39. It was to the Sanhedrists that Pilate announced the prisoner’s innocence (ver. 38), and it was the rabble that not simply “cried” but “shouted” or “roared” (cf. xii. 13, xix. 6, 12, 15; Ac. xxii. 23): “Not this man but the Bar-abba!” (ver. 40).

(4) AN APPEAL TO PITY

xix. I-II

1 *Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.*

2 *And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,*

3 *And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.*

4 *Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.*

5 *Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!*

6 *When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.*

7 *The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.*

8 *When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;*

9 *And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.*

10 *Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?*

11 *Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.*

PILATE'S attempt to save our Lord and evade the shame of condemning one whom he had pronounced innocent having thus been frustrated, he passed sentence, and according to custom the prisoner was handed over to be scourged and mocked. See exposition of Mt. xxvii. 27-30. The brutal

work was done in the open courtyard of the Prætorium out of sight of the Sanhedrists and the rabble in the street ; but Pilate witnessed it and, familiar as he was with like scenes, the spectacle of the prisoner faint and bleeding moved his compassion and suggested to him a chance of even yet procuring His release. Bidding the guards conduct Him thither after him, he strode back to the Gabbatha. " See," said he to the waiting assemblage, " I am bringing him out to you, that ye may be assured that I find no fault in him." He was about to represent to them the shame of putting an innocent man to death and plead with them for pity's sake to rest content and carry their animosity no further, when he was interrupted by the emergence of the prisoner escorted by His guards and attired in the pitiful bravery of His mock coronation as " King of the Jews." What more need Pilate say ? The woeful spectacle was surely enough. " Behold, the man ! " he cried. Evidently the hearts of the Pharisees and the rabble were touched. At any rate it was the Chief Priests and their servile creatures, the officers of the Court of the Sanhedrin (cf. vii. 32, 45, xviii. 3), who spoke. " They shouted, saying, Crucify him ! crucify him ! "

Their callousness disgusted Pilate, and he impatiently exclaimed : " Take him ye, and crucify him ; for I find in him no fault." It was a hasty attempt to absolve himself of responsibility for the crime, but it was an unreasonable proposal, since the execution of a capital sentence lay with the Roman Procurator and not with the Jewish authorities (cf. xviii. 31) ; and it rallied the wavering resolution of the Pharisees. " We have a law," retorted " the Jews," signifying in St. John's parlance the Jewish rulers of both parties (cf. i. 19), " and according to the law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." It was an astute plea. " The Son of God " was a Messianic title (cf. exposition of Mt. iii. 17), but this Pilate did not understand. He took it to mean a divine personage, construing it after his pagan fashion. It recalled to him the numerous stories in the old mythology of deities who had " come down in the likeness of men " (cf. Ac. xiv. 11) ; and it evinces what an impression his converse with our Lord had made upon

him that his soul was shaken by apprehension lest the prisoner might actually be a heavenly visitant. To put Him to death would then be a monstrous impiety, and he hastily had Him conducted back within doors, and there asked Him : " Whence art thou ? " Hitherto our Lord had freely conferred with the Procurator, answering his questions ; but after witnessing the base pusillanimity of his dealings with the Jewish rulers He maintained a scornful silence. " Speakest thou not to me ? " Pilate remonstrated. " Knowest thou not that I have authority to release thee and I have authority to crucify thee ? " It was indeed a poor boast. Where had been his vaunted authority when he truckled to the Jewish rulers and submitted to their dictation against his express judgment ? Our Lord contemptuously told him that, little as he knew it, he was nothing but a blind instrument of God's sovereign purpose. " Thou hadst had no authority against Me unless it had been so given thee from above (cf. exposition of iii. 3)." Here our Lord, ever quick to make allowance, recognised an extenuation of the Procurator's guilt. Like the Roman soldiers who presently nailed Him to the cross (cf. Lk. xxiii. 34), he " knew not what he was doing " ; and so far he was excusable. A heavier guilt lay with the Chief Priest Caiaphas, a Jew who, knowing the testimony of the prophetic scriptures, was sinning against the light in rejecting the Promised Saviour. " Therefore he that delivered Me unto thee (cf. xviii. 30) hath greater sin."

(5) AN APPEAL TO PATRIOTISM

xix. 12-15

12 *And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him : but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend : whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.*

13 *When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.*

14 *And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour : and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King !*

15 *But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King ? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.*

HIS colloquy with our Lord deepened the Procurator's apprehension and his reluctance to put Him to death. "In consequence hereof Pilate sought to release Him." He returned to the Gabbatha and renewed his remonstrance, but he was met by angry clamour and a significant threat. "The Jews shouted, saying, If thou release this man, thou art not a friend of the Emperor. Everyone that maketh himself a king is a rebel against the Emperor." Thus it appeared what lengths the Jewish rulers were prepared to go in order to compass their end. They would even abjure the agelong hope of Israel's redemption and account it treason to the heathen tyrant. And a report of misprision of treason would have been fatal to a governor who was already in ill odour with the imperial authorities. It was indeed an ominous menace, and it effectually cowed Pilate.

Yet he persevered and made a last attempt to save the prisoner. It was an appeal to the spirit of patriotism which surely, despite their abnegation thereof, still survived in the breasts of those Jewish rulers. Observe what he did. "He

brought out Jesus and "not "sat down" but "seated Him (cf. Eph. i. 20) on a tribunal." Such was the Roman reverence for law that no judgment was reckoned valid unless delivered from a tribunal; and since it was occasionally necessary that cases should be tried not in a regular courthouse but in market-places or by the wayside, a magistrate was always provided with a portable tribunal. So it happened now when the scene of our Lord's trial was not the judgment-hall of the Prætorium but the broad landing of the stairs leading up to the gateway. A tribunal had been erected there that Pilate might thence pronounce sentence in legal form; but ere doing so he summoned forth the prisoner wearing His mock regalities—the crown of thorns and the purple robe, and seated Him on the tribunal as on a throne. And then, addressing "the Jews," that is, the Jewish rulers, representing the two parties of the Sadducees and the Pharisees, he pointed to Him. "See!" said he; "your King!" It was a cutting satire on their demand that He should be sentenced as a sedition-monger for aspiring to the Jewish throne; and his hope was that, recognising the absurdity of the charge and the indignity which they were putting upon their country by taking seriously the pretensions of a poor broken, friendless man, they would for very shame abandon the prosecution. But indeed they appreciated the situation more justly than Pilate. They knew that, though no rebel as they alleged, our Lord was the mortal enemy of their abuses; and they shouted, both Pharisees and Sadducees: "Away with him! away with him! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your King?" Pilate asked. And what was their reply? "We have no King but Cæsar." The Evangelist is careful to observe that it came from the Chief Priests, the leaders of the time-serving party of the Sadducees. Their Pharisaic colleagues held their peace. Theirs was the patriotic party, and despite their animosity they would not stoop so low as to repudiate thus their people's long and heroic aspiration for freedom and acknowledge the supremacy of the heathen oppressor.

It was indeed a shameless betrayal of Israel's faith and freedom, the sacred causes which had engaged the devotion of her sons for centuries; and the Evangelist expresses the

horror which it awoke in loyal breasts, when he interrupts the narrative with that significant parenthesis: "Now it was the Preparation of the Passover: it was about the sixth hour." Those critics who, eager to make out that our Gospel is no testimony of the Apostle John to the things which he had seen and heard but a religious romance of the second century, unreasonably infer from the Sanhedrists' refusal to enter the Prætorium (cf. xviii. 28, where see exposition) that they still had the Paschal Supper in prospect, find a corroboration of their argument in the phrase "the Preparation of the Passover," taking it to mean that this the day of our Lord's trial and crucifixion was the day when the preparations were made for the Supper in the evening. Herein, however, they convict themselves of inconsiderateness. For in the New Testament the phrase in that connection is never "prepare the Passover" but "make it ready"—a different word in the original (cf. Mt. xxvi. 17 R.V., 19; Mk. xiv. 12 R.V., 15, 16; Lk. xxii. 8, 9 R.V., 12); and Preparation (*paraskeuê*) signifies always the sixth day of the week, our Friday, so called among the Jews as the day of preparation for the Sabbath, the Day of Rest. The disciples carried the name into the Christian Church, and it continues still in the Greek calendar. So the word signifies in every instance where it occurs in the New Testament. Thus at the close of his narrative of the Crucifixion St. Matthew has (xxvii. 62 R.V.) "on the morrow, which is the day after the Preparation"; St. Mark (xv. 42) "when the even was now come, because it was the Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath"; and St. Luke (xxiii. 54) "that day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew on." And so, when St. John speaks of "the Preparation of the Passover," he means "Friday of the Passover-week." Here lay the impiety of the Chief Priests' repudiation of the national hope—that it was uttered on that solemn day of national remembrance and consecration. And so he adds "it was about the sixth hour," meaning, according to his Asian horology (see exposition of i. 39), not noon but 6 a.m. when the taste of the last meal they had was still in their mouths—the Holy Supper which commemorated the deliverance of their fathers from the land of bondage.

THE CRUCIFIXION

xix. 16-30

16 *Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.*

17 *And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha :*

18 *Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.*

19 *And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.*

20 *This title then read many of the Jews : for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city : and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.*

21 *Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews ; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.*

22 *Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.*

23 *Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part ; and also his coat : now the coat was without seam, *woven from the top throughout.*

24 *They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it but cast lots for it, whose it shall be : that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.*

25 *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of †Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.*

* Or, wrought.

† Or, Clopas.

26 *When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son !*

27 *Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother ! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.*

28 *After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.*

29 *Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar : and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.*

30 *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished : and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.*

SEE exposition of Mt. xxvii. 31-56. Observe how abbreviated is St. John's narrative here. He tells nothing of the happenings on the way to Calvary—our Lord's fainting beneath the burden of His Cross in passing the city-gate and its transference to the stout shoulders of Simon of Cyrene (cf. Mt. xxvii. 32 ; Mk. xv. 21 ; Lk. xxiii. 26) ; the lamentation of the women (cf. Lk. xxiii. 27) ; the presentation of the anæsthetic of medicated wine (cf. Mt. xxvii. 34 ; Mk. xv. 23) ; and His prayer for the ignorant soldiers as they drove the nails through His palms (cf. Lk. xxiii. 34). And what is the reason of his silence ? It is not merely that his wont was to relate nothing already sufficiently recorded by his predecessors (cf. Introduction, p. xxix) but that his narrative is a personal testimony to the things which he had seen and heard (cf. xix. 35, xxi. 24 ; 1 Jo. i. 1-3), and of those happenings he was not an eye-witness. He had witnessed the trial at the gateway of the Prætorium—he and he alone of the Eleven ; for Peter was hiding himself in shame for his denial of the Master and the others had never rallied from their panic in Gethsemane. John alone was present in the throng that watched the proceedings, hoping to the last that the Lord would be acquitted ; and it is written with reasonable probability in the apocryphal *Acts of Pilate* that when sentence had been passed and he saw the prisoner actually

led away to Calvary, "bearing the cross for Himself" (ver. 17 R.V.)—a realistic touch revealing the eye-witness, he hastened away to acquaint Mary His mother with all that had befallen. He found her with Mary the Magdalene, Salome, and other women friends; and when on recovering from the cruel blow she would not be withheld from repairing to the woeful scene, he escorted her and her companions thither.

When they arrived, the brutal work was done. The three crosses had been erected with their quivering loads; and they beheld the dear Lord hanging there between the two brigands with a placard above His head bearing the inscription JESUS THE NAZARENE THE KING OF THE JEWS. The custom was that, when a criminal was sentenced to crucifixion, the magistrate should write with charcoal on a whitened board his name and his crime; and this was carried before him on the way to the place of execution and there affixed to the cross above his head. Observe how the Evangelist here reverts to the Prætorium. It was there and not at Calvary that the placard was inscribed; nor was it at Calvary that the Jewish rulers made their protest, since Pilate did not accompany the procession thither but remained at the Prætorium (cf. Mk. xv. 44). From his place in the crowd John had seen him inscribe the placard at the tribunal on the Gabbatha ere the procession started. Chafing at the humiliation inflicted upon him by the Jewish rulers the Procurator had taken a petty revenge. He should have written JESUS A REBEL; but as he wrote it, the inscription cut them to the quick. With the proud Judæans "Nazarene" was a term of contempt (see exposition of Mt. ii. 23), and it added a sting to the designation of the criminal as "the King of the Jews." They were quick to perceive and resent the insult, and they bade him alter it, at least so far as to write "He said 'I am King of the Jews,'" thus making it appear that He had been sentenced not only for treason to the Emperor but for despite to their nation. "What I have written I have written" was his haughty response; "What I will, I will, and there an end." And he not only let it stand but wrote it in Hebrew and Latin and Greek that, when borne along the *Via Dolorosa* and afterwards affixed to the cross, it might be intelligible to all the

motley multitude that thronged the city at the festal season and to the travellers on the northern highway which skirted the knoll of Calvary.

ישוע הנצרי מלך היהודים

IESUS NAZARENUS REX IUDÆORUM

ΙΗΣΟΥΣ Ο ΝΑΖΩΡΑΙΟΣ Ο ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΩΝ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ

A quaternion of soldiers (cf. Ac. xii. 4) was charged with the business of crucifying each of the three victims, and when John and his sorrowful company arrived on the scene, the four who had to do with our Lord had accomplished their task and were engaged in a congenial employment—the appropriation of His garments, since these fell to His executioners in accordance with an ancient practice which obtained among ourselves till quite recent date, as exemplified by the case of Dennis the hangman in *Barnaby Rudge*. Like every Jew our Lord had five pieces of apparel—a pair of sandals, a turban (*tsaniḥ*), a girdle, a cloak (*himation*), and a tunic (*chiton*). There were four soldiers, and one took His sandals, another His turban, the third His girdle, and the fourth His cloak. There remained His tunic—a sort of vest reaching to the knees (see exposition of Mt. v. 40), and what should they do with it? They were for rending it into four pieces to serve for patching (cf. Mt. ix. 16) when they observed a peculiarity in its make. It was woven all of a piece without seams. Thus it was that the Galilean women spun their menfolk's tunics, but it was a novelty to the Roman soldiers and, loath to tear it, they cast lots for it, unwittingly, as the Evangelist remarks, re-enacting the contumely inflicted on that psalmist of old whose sufferings were prophetic of our Lord's (Ps. xxii. 18).

If there be truth in the tradition that His seamless tunic was a gift of Mary, woven for Him with her own hands, the spectacle of the soldiers chaffering over it would strike home to her heart. While their attention was thus diverted, she and her companions

—John and three women, her sister Salome the mother of John, Mary the wife of Clopas (Alphæus) and mother of James the Little (see exposition of Mt. x. 2, 4 and xii. 46), and Mary the Magdalene—crept close to the cross, and His eyes lighted upon them. The sight of them was welcome to Him ; for amid His mortal anguish He had one earthly care—what should become of Mary when He was gone. She had indeed her other sons, His “brethren” (see exposition of Mt. xii. 46–50), but they were men of coarse fibre, narrow-minded, narrow-hearted Jews who sneered at His claims (cf. vii. 1–9). By and by indeed they acknowledged these, conquered by the evidence of His Resurrection (cf. Ac. i. 14) ; but as yet they were unbelievers, and it grieved Him that Mary should be left with no better guardians in her old age. “Better,” says an old Scots proverb, “kind fremit than fremit kin (kind strangers than estranged kinsfolk) ” ; and His thoughts had turned to “the disciple whom He loved.” And now when He sees them standing together by His cross, He unburdens His mind of its last earthly care by entrusting her to his loving custody. “Woman (see exposition of ii. 4),” said He, “see, thy son. See, thy mother.” His bequest to the Eleven in the Upper Room had been His peace (cf. xiv. 27), but here John is endowed with a peculiar legacy. And he received it as a sacred trust. When it is written that “from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home,” more is meant than merely that till the day of her death his home was Mary’s. Her “o’erfraught heart” burst. She swooned, and John conveyed her away to his lodging in the city.

Hence it is that there is here another blank in his narrative. It was during his absence that the unthinking crowd, abetted by the exultant Chief Priests, derided the helpless Sufferer, that “the dying thief” besought His grace, and that He cried in desolation of soul “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (cf. Mt. xxvii. 39–46 ; Mk. xv. 29–34 ; Lk. xxiii. 35–42). Just then John returned after depositing Mary in the asylum of his home, and heard from the fevered lips the moan “I thirst” and witnessed the ensuing scene which recalled to his remembrance the experience of a suffering saint of old (cf. Ps. lxix. 2). See exposition of Mt. xxvii. 47–49. He does

not repeat the story already told by his predecessors, but he enriches their narratives with several illuminating touches.

(1) He shows whence the kindly soldier obtained the "vinegar" or sour wine wherewith He moistened our Lord's lips: "There was set a vessel, full of vinegar"—a beaker of *posca* which the soldiers had brought for their own refreshment and had deposited conveniently for their requirement.

(2) St. Matthew (xxvii. 48) and St. Mark (xv. 36) have it that when he had extracted the piece of sponge which, after the ancient manner, served as a stopper, the soldier "put it on a reed" and so reached it up to the parched lips. Reeds grow by a riverside, and where did he procure one on the barren knoll of Calvary? With the accuracy of an eye-witness St. John states the actual fact. According to our text he has it that the sponge was "put upon hyssop"; and this creates a harder puzzle. For hyssop was a mere creeper, "springing out of the wall" (cf. 1 Ki. iv. 33); and its stalks were but tendrils. It was acutely conjectured by Joachim Camerarius, a Reformed scholar of the sixteenth century that in the original *hyssopo*, "hyssop," is here a scribal error for *hysso*, "javelin," the Latin *pilum*; and his suggestion, accepted by scholars from Beza onward, has since been confirmed by its discovery in at least one ancient manuscript. Unquestionably it was thus that the Evangelist wrote. The soldier, unable to reach so high, fixed the dripping sponge on the point of his javelin and therewith moistened our Lord's lips. It was the last kindness that He received on earth, and one would fain know what afterwards befell His benefactor. Surely he inherited the Lord's promise (Mt. x. 42) that "whosoever should give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, he should in no wise lose his reward."

(3) It is written that when, thus refreshed, our Lord uttered His last word "It is finished"—a sigh of relief, a cry of victory, "He bowed His head and gave up the ghost" (literally "delivered up the breath"); and it is significant that in the original "He bowed His head" is the phrase which our Lord had employed when He said (Mt. viii. 20; Lk. ix. 58): "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." Plainly St. John

had in mind that early saying, and when he echoes it here, he celebrates the Saviour's triumph. All the days of His earthly sojourn the homeless Saviour prosecuted the work which had been given Him to do, never resting since the work was great and the time was short (cf. ix. 4) ; but now His work was done, and He took His rest. " The Son of Man hath not where to lay down His head " : " He said, ' It is finished,' and He laid down His head."

A BROKEN HEART

-xix. 31-37

31 *The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.*

32 *Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.*

33 *But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs :*

34 *But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.*

35 *And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true : and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.*

36 *For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled. A bone of him shall not be broken.*

37 *And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.*

CRUCIFIXION was a lingering doom. Its victims hung in agony for several days until they bled to death or perished of hunger and thirst, unless they were vouchsafed the *coup-de-grâce* of the *crurifragium* or "leg-breaking"—the cruel mercy of a speedy despatch with blows of a heavy mallet. So was it done that afternoon on Calvary, not out of compassion but at the desire of the Jewish rulers. It was "the Preparation" or Friday (cf. exposition of ver. 14), and the evening ushered in the Sabbath Day. It would have been a desecration had the victims been left hanging (cf. Dt. xxi. 23), more especially since "that Sabbath was a high day," being the Sabbath of the Holy Week. And therefore the rulers had procured an order from Pilate that ere evening the three victims should be done

to death and their bodies removed. The soldiers accordingly despatched the two brigands, but on coming to our Lord they found Him already dead. There was no need to subject Him to the *crurifragium*, but to make sure one of them, whom tradition names Longinus, drove his spear through His left side and pierced His heart.

A marvel ensued. When the spear was withdrawn, it was followed by an effusion of commingled blood and water. St. John was standing by and witnessed the phenomenon. It amazed him. It was inexplicable to him, and in relating the incident he attempted no explanation but simply affirmed the fact and pledged his word for it. "One who hath seen hath testified, and his testimony is based on fact, and he"—an emphatic pronoun denoting the man who had seen it and whom his readers knew so well and could so fully trust—"knoweth that he is telling a true story, that ye also may believe." A legend-monger would certainly have construed the blood and the water as symbols of the two Sacraments, after the patristic fashion still prevalent.

Let the Water and the Blood,
From Thy riven side which flow'd,
Be of sin the double cure ;
Cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.

The Evangelist's reticence regarding the reason of a fact which he so emphatically affirms, is a strong evidence of its reality.

But what was a mystery to the Evangelist is a mystery no longer. In the year 1847 Dr. William Stroud, a learned and devout English physician, after quarter of a century's investigation and reflection published in *A Treatise on the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ* his acquiescence in a theory which had already been presented both here and on the Continent—that our Lord's speedy death after hanging only six hours (cf. Mk. xv. 25, 33) on the cross was due, in medical phrase, to rupture of the heart, a rare but well authenticated experience which is occasioned by overwhelming emotion and has as its chief symptoms a spasm of acute anguish and a piercing shriek (cf. Mt. xxvii. 50 ; Mk. xv. 37). His argument was corroborated

by numerous authorities including the celebrated Prof. J. V. Simpson who lives in the grateful remembrance of suffering humanity for his introduction of the anæsthetic use of chloroform. Take his statement of the case.

“The rapidity of the resulting death is regulated by the size and shape of the ruptured opening. But usually death very speedily ensues in consequence of the blood escaping from the interior of the heart into the cavity of the large surrounding heart-sac or pericardium ; which sac has, in cases of rupture of the heart, been found on dissection to contain sometimes two, three, four, or more pounds of blood accumulated within it, and separated into red clot and limpid serum, or ‘blood and water,’—as is seen in blood when collected out of the body in a cup or basin in the operation of common blood-letting.

“No medical jurist would, in a court of law, venture to assert, from the mere symptoms preceding death, that a person had certainly died of rupture of the heart. To obtain positive *proof* that rupture of the heart was the cause of death, a *post-mortem* examination of the chest would be necessary. In ancient times, such dissections were not practised. But the details left regarding Christ’s death are most strikingly peculiar in this respect, that they offer us the result of a very rude dissection, as it were, by the gash made in His side after death by the thrust of the Roman soldier’s spear. The effect of that wounding or piercing of the side was an escape of ‘blood and water,’ visible to the Apostle John standing some distance off ; and I do not believe that anything could possibly account for this appearance, as described by that Apostle, except a collection of blood effused into the distended sac of the pericardium in consequence of rupture of the heart, and afterwards separated, as is usual with *extravasated* blood, into those two parts, viz. (1) crassamentum or red clot, and (2) watery serum. The subsequent puncture from below of the distended pericardial sac would most certainly, under such circumstances, lead to the immediate ejection and escape of its sanguineous contents in the form of red clots of blood and a stream of watery serum, exactly corresponding to that description given in the sacred narrative, ‘and forthwith came there out blood *and*

water,'—an appearance which no other natural event or mode of death can explain or account for."

And thus it appears that our Blessed Lord died literally of a broken heart. The physical cause was hidden from the Evangelist, yet he read a profound significance in the moving incident, recognising in it the fulfilment of two sacred scriptures. (1) Recalling the ancient ordinance that since a lamb was offered for each household on the night of the deliverance from Egypt and was eaten in one house, none of the flesh should be carried abroad out of the house nor should a bone of it be broken (cf. Ex. xii. 46; Num. ix. 12), he read in our Lord's exemption from the *crurifragium* a providential attestation that He was indeed the true Paschal Lamb, "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (cf. i. 29, 36). (2) The piercing of our Lord's side recalled to him that other scripture (Zech. xii. 10) where the Lord foretells how His rebellious people will yet repent and turn to Him in sorrow for their ingratitude: "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced. And," continues the prophet, "they shall mourn for Him as a man mourneth for his only son." And thus at the close of his dark story of Israel's rejection of her Saviour the Evangelist sees the dawn of a better day—a day of repentance and faith.

HIS BURIAL

xix. 38-42

38 *And after this Joseph of Arimathæa, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.*

39 *And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.*

40 *Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.*

41 *Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.*

42 *There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.*

CF. Mt. xxvii. 57-61; Mk. xv. 42-47; Lk. xxiii. 50-56, where see exposition. Here is exemplified St. John's constant purpose wherever he retells an incident already told by his predecessors (cf. Introduction, p. xxix). Whatever they had sufficiently recorded he invariably passed over, and therefore he is silent here regarding the part played by those devoted women, the two Marys (cf. Mt. xxvii. 61; Mk. xv. 47; Lk. xxiii. 55, 56); and on the other hand he enriched their narratives with significant touches which they had overlooked. Observe his additions here.

1. They mention only the intervention of Joseph of Arimathæa, while St. John records that his fellow-Sanhedrist Nicodemus also lent his aid. Joseph furnished the grave, a lair in the new sepulchre which he had lately hewn out of the rock in his garden on Mount Olivet as a last resting-place for himself and his family; and Nicodemus provided the ceremonies and also, with lavish generosity as for a royal burial,

the spices "as the custom of the Jews is" not "to bury" but "to embalm" (see exposition of xii. 7). And wherefore is it that the earlier Evangelists make no mention of Nicodemus? Not merely that he rendered a less service than his wealthy colleague (cf. Mt. xxvii. 57) but that had they introduced him here, they must have enlarged upon his antecedents. For, confining themselves to our Lord's Galilean ministry (cf. Introduction, p. xxxii), they had no occasion to tell of his previous appearances—his nocturnal interview with our Lord during His visit to the Passover at the beginning of His public ministry (cf. iii. 1-21) and his recent protest in the Sanhedrin on His behalf (cf. vii. 50-52). But St. John, busying himself with the record of our Lord's periodic ministries at Jerusalem, has recounted both these appearances of Nicodemus; and it was inevitable that after thus engaging his readers' interest in him he should now exhibit the issue of his long hesitation, his brave though belated confession of his faith.

2. He explains why it was that our Lord was buried in Joseph's private sepulchre. The interment of a crucified criminal in a public Jewish cemetery would have been accounted a desecration, and the rulers would have prohibited it. There was no time to seek a remote burial-place, since it was the late afternoon of "the Preparation," Friday, and with the fall of evening the Sabbath would begin. And therefore Joseph offered his sepulchre, since it was close to Calvary on the northern slope of Olivet, and, being a private sepulchre, the rulers had no jurisdiction over it.

THE RESURRECTION

xx, xxi

“ THE BODY OF HIS GLORY ”

IT is written in St. Luke's report of St. Paul's memorable defence before the Court of the Areopagus at Athens that his audience, including philosophers of the Epicurean and Stoic schools, listened appreciatively to his argument until, reaching his conclusion, he proclaimed as the crowning evidence of the Christian Faith the raising of our Lord from the dead ; and this they greeted with ridicule and contempt. To the intellectual Greeks the idea of a resurrection of the dead seemed a palpable absurdity ; and the difficulty which it presented to their minds was defined by those Corinthian converts of the Apostle who submitted to him the twofold question (1 Cor. xv. 35) : “ How are the dead raised ? and with what manner of body do they come ? ” How, they meant, is it possible that a body which has returned to dust and remingled with the elements, should ever be recollected and recomposed ?

The busy tribes of flesh and blood
With all their lives and cares
Are carried downwards by Thy flood,
And lost in following years.

And even were it possible, what place can a material body hold in a spiritual realm, the Kingdom of God which “ flesh and blood cannot inherit ” (ver. 50) ?

The Apostle's answer is that the bodies with which we shall come at the Resurrection, will not be bodies of flesh and blood. They will indeed be the bodies which we wear now, but they will be “ changed,” so transfigured and glorified that they will be no longer “ natural ” or “ terrestrial bodies ” but “ spiritual ” or “ celestial bodies.” “ This corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality.”

Those bodies that corrupted fell
Shall incorrupted rise,
And mortal forms shall spring to life
Immortal in the skies.

And this hope is no mere dream of an oldworld faith. It has been marvellously confirmed and illumined of late by the investigations of physical science regarding the qualities of matter. It is now a commonplace of natural philosophy that there is a matter within matter—"that strange substance," as a modern master has it, "known as the luminiferous or interstellar *ether*, the medium through which the 'X-ray' and wireless telegraphy perform their work." "The result has been to compel a new definition of matter. Extension, ponderability, form, dimension, and such qualities can no longer be thought sufficient to define matter. 'Empty' space can no longer be spoken of, for no portion of space is empty. It can no longer be said that 'no two portions of matter can occupy the same space at the same time,' for they do so constantly. Indeed, it seems to be a very condition of the existence of the matter which we see that it should lie bathed in a matter which we do not see. For the universal ether is matter. As Lord Kelvin has demonstrated, it shows in some ways the phenomena of a highly tenuous fluid, in others that of an infinitely dense solid, and in still others the properties of a jelly. It is the medium through which light moves by waves of ascertained length, electric energy by waves of a different length, heat by still a third, and the energy which we call gravitation by some means not yet ascertained. It has been weighed and measured. A sphere of it the size of the earth would, if compressed to the density of the earth, be in size somewhere between a marble and an orange. It is the medium in the opaque flesh through which the invisible rays of light pass to form an X-ray photograph. Its waves flow through so dense a mass of matter as a block of glass, as water flows through a sieve."

Thus there is, "as it were, a brain within the brain, a body within the body, something like that which the Orientals have for ages spoken of as the 'Astral Body' "—"a body," as St. Augustine has it, "simple and lucid, which the Apostle styles 'spiritual,' while others call it 'ethereal.'" And this is the perfect body. Matter as now known by the senses is only matter in the making; and our bodies are not our bodies as they shall be. They are meanwhile in process of evolution; and

when the process is complete, they will be stripped of “this muddy vesture of decay” and will emerge purged of their present grossness and suited to that Kingdom which flesh and blood cannot inherit. And thus the resurrection of the body is nothing else than the culmination of its evolution, the completion of its creation. The natural body is, as it were, the rough cast of the spiritual body. It is the scaffolding, and death is the removal thereof; it is the integument, and the resurrection is the emergence of the spiritual body, incorruptible and glorious.

Our Lord was “the first-fruits of them that are asleep”; and in due season “them also which sleep in Him, will God bring with Him.” “Like as He was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also shall walk in newness of life”; and mysterious as the experience which awaits us must meanwhile remain, something thereof is discovered to us by the evangelic records of our Lord’s post-resurrection manifestations.

1. The body which He brought forth from the sepulchre was the same which He had worn while He companied with His disciples; but it was “changed,” so transfigured and glorified that, when they beheld Him, they were never assured that it was He until He vouchsafed them some revealing token (cf. Lk. xxiv. 30, 31, 35, where see exposition). And what wonder? It is oftentimes difficult to recognise a friend whom one has never seen for years; and what is the change which time works compared with the transfiguration which will be wrought when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality?

2. On the testimony of the eye-witnesses the body of the Risen Lord, His “spiritual body” as St. Paul terms it, displayed the qualities of the ethereal bodies whereof science dreams, “compact,” as these are, “of a kind of matter which behaves quite differently from that which our senses deal with. It is a material which, so far as science has anything to say, is essentially indestructible. It moves freely amongst and through ordinary matter without let or hindrance. Such ethereal bodies compacted with living souls would of necessity inhabit a universe

of their own, even though that universe should occupy the same space as this one does. Neither earth nor fire nor water could in the least impede their movement. In frost and flame they would be equally at home. With the swiftness of light or gravitation they could speed from where old Boötes leads his leash to where Sagittarius draws his bow in the south." Even so was it with our Risen Lord. On the selfsame evening He manifested Himself to Peter at Jerusalem (cf. Lk. xxiv. 33, 34), to the two at Emmaus some seven or eight miles distant (cf. vers. 18-32), and again to the disciples in their upper room at Jerusalem (cf. Jo. xx. 19-23). On this last occasion the doors were fast shut for fear of the Jews, yet they presented no barrier to His entrance.

3. His glorified body was imperceptible to natural sense—invisible to the natural eye, inaudible to the natural ear; and, as we have already observed (see exposition of Lk. xxiv. 16), His manifestation was in every instance a miracle—the lifting of the veil of sense from the hearts of His disciples. Thus, when He joined the two on the road to Emmaus, they saw none approaching and heard no footstep; but suddenly the veil was lifted, and behold! He was by their side. And on His Ascension Day He appeared to the Eleven in their upper room in Jerusalem, and as He conducted them through the city to Mount Olivet, none whom they encountered by the way saw Him in their midst, forasmuch as the veil of sense was on their hearts (cf. Lk. xxiv. 50; Ac. i. 6-12).

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE RISEN LORD

I. TO MARY AT THE SEPULCHRE

XX. I-18

1 *The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.*

2 *Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.*

3 *Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.*

4 *So they ran both together : and the other disciple did out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.*

5 *And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying ; yet went he not in.*

6 *Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,*

7 *And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.*

8 *Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.*

9 *For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.*

10 *Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.*

11 *But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping : and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,*

12 *And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.*

13 *And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou ? She*

saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14 *And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.*

15 *Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.*

16 *Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.*

17 *Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.*

18 *Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.*

IT is a striking evidence of the reverence wherewith, despite His frequent protests against its Pharisaic misuse, our Lord had regarded the beneficent ordinance of the Day of Rest, that even the brave women who had aided in the hasty committal of His body to its resting-place in Joseph's sepulchre ere fall of evening when the Sabbath began, forthwith betook themselves to their abodes in Jerusalem and, though their hearts were with Him lying there, passed the day in devout repose according to the commandment (cf. Lk. xxiii. 56). It ended as it began in the evening; and no sooner was it over than they were astir and set out for the sepulchre "early, when it was yet dark," that they might be there with the first flush of dawn. Since it was she that played so memorable a part, St. John expressly mentions only Mary the Magdalene who, as we have seen, was none other than the sister of Lazarus and Martha (cf. exposition of Lk. vii. 36-50); but his narrative plainly indicates (cf. ver. 2) that, as the other Evangelists affirm (cf. Mk. xvi. 1; Mt. xxviii. 1; Lk. xxiii. 55-xxiv. 1), she was accompanied by the other women who had been with her at the cross—Mary the mother of James the Little and Salome the mother of John.

Their purpose was merely to assuage their grief by weeping at the sepulchre, as Mary the Magdalene had done at the grave of her brother Lazarus (cf. xi. 31) ; and to their surprise, when they arrived, they found the entrance to the cavern standing open, though it had been duly closed after His interment on the Friday by a large circular slab of stone which rolled heavily to and fro along a groove on the face of the rock. The idea which presented itself to their minds was that unfriendly hands had pillaged the sepulchre of its sacred relics and probably cast them into the Valley of Hinnom, the common depository of the bodies of crucified criminals (see exposition of Mt. v. 22). They did not stay to investigate the interior, but Mary sped away to Simon and John, "the other disciple who was dear to Jesus" (see exposition of Mt. x. 2), and told them of their discovery. Observe how graphic is the narrative here, depicting the consternation of the two. "Out went Peter and the other disciple, and away to the sepulchre." At first they kept pace, but John was the younger, and age told. "They were running, the two together, and the other disciple ran ahead more quickly than Peter and came first to the sepulchre."

And what did he find there? The sepulchre was a vault hewn out of the rocky mountainside ; and after the manner described in the Talmud lairs were excavated on the floor—three on either side and two at the inner end, each measuring four cubits in length, seven in depth, and six in breadth, where the embalmed bodies were deposited side by side. Our Lord's was the first body thus laid to rest in Joseph's new sepulchre, and it had been duly placed in the lair next the entrance on the right. John entered the open vault and, peering down into the lair, he made out that the cerements were lying flat on the floor ; "yet went he not in." That is to say, he did not descend into the lair ; but just then Peter arrived, and after his impetuous fashion he descended and investigated the situation. And what did he find? Not only the linen cloths which had swathed the Lord's body, collapsed on the floor, but the napkin which had been coiled separately about His head (cf. xi. 44), remaining where His head had rested, but still retaining its fold. On Peter's report of the situation

John descended and verified it by personal inspection. What could it mean? Evidently the grave-clothes had not been stripped off and cast aside. It was rather as though the body had evaporated or crumbled, leaving them empty. It was inexplicable. John might have doubted it had he only had Peter's word for it; but he could not doubt the evidence of his own eyes. What could it mean? They never guessed the wonderful truth; "for," says St. John, shamefastly confessing their heedlessness of the testimony of Scripture (cf. Ps. xvi. 10), albeit reinforced by the Lord's own premonitions (cf. Mt. xvi. 21, xvii. 23, xx. 19), "not yet did they know the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead."

Sorely puzzled, what could they do but betake themselves to their abodes in Jerusalem? As they emerged from the sepulchre, they encountered Mary, who had returned thither alone after bringing them word, and had stood outside weeping while they explored the interior. They had no comfort for her, and when they went their way, she remained. Her love for the dear Master bound her to the place, and it was richly rewarded. Presently she entered and with tear-dimmed eyes peered into the empty lair. It was still empty to the eye of sense, but the revealing miracle was wrought upon her. The veil of sense was lifted from her heart, and she—not "seeth" but—"beholdeth" an angel at either end of the lair, and heard what was inaudible to the natural ear—their question why she wept. She told them the story as she had told it to Peter and John (cf. ver. 2). Then something arrested her—a glance of the heavenly strangers or a stirring behind her. Turning sharply, she found herself face to face with Jesus, but so changed was He, wearing as He did not "the body of His humiliation" but "the body of His glory" (cf. Phil. iii. 21), that she did not recognise Him. "Woman," said He, "why art thou weeping? Whom art thou seeking?" Fancying that it was the gardener resentful of her trespass on his domain, "Sir," she cried, "if it be thou that hast carried Him off, tell me where thou hast put Him, and I will take Him away." And therewith she turned again to the lair.

At every manifestation of the Risen Lord He had need to

reveal His identity by a token reminiscent of the past. See the token which He vouchsafes here. "Mary!" said He or rather, as it is in the original, "Miriam!"—the Hebrew form of the name. In familiar intercourse Jews were wont to lapse into their kindly mother-tongue, and her Hebrew name spoken with an accent of tenderness which she had never heard from any other lips, revealed Him to her. She turned in glad surprise. "Rabboni!" she cried (see exposition of Mk. x. 51), and would have fallen at His feet and embraced them and covered them with kisses (cf. Mt. xxviii. 9). But He drew back. "Touch Me not" said He or rather "Cling not to Me"—the phrase which Simon the Pharisee had used when he saw her, a sinful woman, caressing His feet as He reclined at table, and protested that had He been a prophet, He would have perceived what sort of woman she was who was thus "clinging to Him" (Lk. vii. 39).

Wherefore did He repel her thus? It was in no wise that her affection was unwelcome to Him but that she misconceived the situation. She never dreamed of the amazing reality; for neither she nor any of her fellow-disciples, even Peter and John (cf. ver. 9), had imagined that He would rise again from the dead; and her idea was that the dear Master had somehow returned to life. If she thought at all, she might fancy either that He had not really died on the cross but had only swooned and, as sometimes happened, had recovered consciousness after He was laid in the rock-hewn cavern, or else that a like miracle had been wrought on Him as He had wrought on her brother Lazarus. In any case He had been restored alive, and her idea was that He would take His old place among His disciples and resume the old fellowship. He had been restored, and she would have clung to His feet and held Him fast and never let Him go. And when He retreated from her and bade her forbear, His purpose was to dispel the illusion and show her the reality, so far more blessed than her fancy. The former fellowship was for ever gone, and a nobler fellowship remained in the Father's House whither He was returning and whither they would follow Him in due season. It was not with the past that Mary had now to do but with the glorious future,

and He bade her hasten forthwith to her fellows and tell them the wonderful tidings. Observe how He styles them no longer "My disciples" nor even "My friends" (cf. xv. 14, 15) but "My brethren" (cf. Mt. xxviii. 10)—His Father's sons who would have their eternal home with Him in the Father's House. Yet even so He distinguishes between their sonship and His own. "My Father," He says, "and your Father, My God and your God"—not "our Father, our God." It is in Him, the only begotten of the Father, and in Him alone that we, undeserving prodigals, are brought nigh and reinstated in our forfeited birthright.

2. TO THE DISCIPLES THE SAME EVENING

xx. 19-23

19 *Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.*

20 *And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.*

21 *Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you : as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

22 *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost :*

23 *Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*

IT was at early dawn that the first manifestation of the Risen Lord was vouchsafed to the Magdalene at the empty sepulchre ; and now the Evangelist tells of another "when it was late on that day, the first day of the week." Though second in his catalogue according to his express design of recording only incidents whereof he had personal experience (cf. 1 Jo. i. 1-4), this was not His second manifestation on that ever memorable day. Already in its course He had appeared to Peter (cf. Lk. xxiv. 34 ; 1 Cor. xv. 5) ; and what wonder is it that there is no express record hereof ? His first meeting was with Mary who loved Him so much because she had been so much forgiven ; and thence He hastened to the disciple who had denied Him to assure him that there was forgiveness for him too. What wonder that Peter never divulged the story ? It was too sacred to be told. And that afternoon He had appeared to the two on the road to Emmaus, and had manifested Himself to them at supper "in the breaking of the bread" (Lk. xxiv. 13-35).

When He "vanished out of their sight," they rose and hurried back the seven or eight miles to Jerusalem. Their errand was to tell the great tidings, and it would indeed be "late" when they arrived. They found "the Eleven and them that were with them" not dispersed hither and thither but "gathered together" perhaps, since her friends, the faithful women, were of the company (cf. Lk. xxiv. 10), in John's lodging whither he had conveyed the Lord's mother from Calvary (cf. xix. 27); and the story of Cleopas and his comrade strengthened the hope which was flickering in their breasts. It had been enkindled by the Magdalene's report. Of this indeed they had been incredulous, regarding it as "idle talk," the raving of a mind distraught (cf. Lk. xxiv. 11, where see exposition); but Peter's story, despite his reserve in telling it and his reputation for inconsiderate impulsiveness, compelled attention, and they were assembled in wondering conference when the two arrived from Emmaus with their fresh testimony.

It was a secret meeting, since they were under the ban of the Jewish rulers; and the doors were fast. But an ethereal body is superior to physical limitations, "moving freely amongst and through ordinary matter without let or hindrance," according to the poet's imagination of the Archangel Michael's battle with his adversary, when

The griding sword with discontinuous wound
Pass'd through him: but the ethereal substance closed,
Not long divisible.

No knock was heard, no door unlocked; yet Jesus stood in their midst and calmly addressed to them the customary greeting "Peace be unto you," *shalom lakhem*. In truth He did not enter. He had been with them all the while, according to His word (Mt. xviii. 20) that "where two or three are gathered together in His name, there is He in the midst of them." But He had been hidden from them by the veil of sense; and now the veil was lifted from their hearts, and they saw Him and heard what is inaudible to the natural ear. And then as ever, that they might recognise Him, transfigured as He was, He gave them a token. His token to the Magdalene at the Sepulchre

had been the utterance of her name with His own peculiar tenderness ; and what was His token now ? “ He shewed unto them His hands and His side.” And when they saw the scars where the nails and the spear had pierced, they knew that it was He, their crucified Master.

Observe the significance of this an eye-witness's testimony concerning the glorified body of our Risen Lord. It still exhibited the marks of His mortal passion, no passing scars but abiding memorials, as St. John further testifies when he tells of the vision vouchsafed him in the Isle of Patmos (Rev. v. 6)—how “ in the midst of the Throne stood a Lamb as it had been slain.” Death is the perfecting of life, and the Resurrection is the perfecting of the natural body. “ It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption : it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory : it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power : it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.” The resurrection of the body is the completion of the Creator's purpose ; and even as here our bodies exhibit vestiges of their agelong evolution, so will they, when glorified, retain the imprint of their earthly toil and strife which, sanctified by heavenly grace, are making us the men we shall be. And even so our Lord, “ crowned with glory and honour for the suffering of death,” displays evermore the memorials of His redemptive conflict. The hands which hold our destinies, bear the prints of the nails which fastened them to the Cross, and His breast the scar of the stab which pierced His heart.

Come, let us join our cheerful songs
With angels round the Throne !
Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,
But all their hearts are one.

“ Worthy the Lamb that died,” they cry,
“ To be exalted thus ! ”
“ Worthy the Lamb ! ” let us reply,
“ For He was slain for us.”

Observe further how it is written merely that “ He shewed unto them His hands and His side ” (cf. vers. 25, 27). And what of His feet ? The fashion of crucifixion varied. Sometimes the feet were nailed to the cross, whether by a nail through

each or by a single nail transfixing both ; and so, by a misconstruction of prophetic scripture (cf. Ps. xxii. 16 R.V. marg.), was it commonly supposed to have been done with our Lord. But sometimes they were merely bound with cords. And so, according to the apocryphal *Gospel of Peter*, was it done in our Lord's case ; and so St. John here indicates when, tacitly correcting the popular notion (cf. Lk. xxiv. 39, 40), he says that " He shewed unto them His hands and His side."

It was a glad sight, confirming the hope which had arisen in their troubled breasts and recalling to the Apostles His promise on the dark night of His betrayal and arrest (cf. xvi. 22) : " I will see you again, and your heart will be glad, and your gladness none taketh away from you." Like the Magdalene at the Sepulchre they would have encompassed Him with joyful acclamation, fancying that He was restored to them as of old ; but He hastened to interpose. See what is written : " The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. *Therefore* said Jesus to them again, ' Peace be unto you. Even as the Father commissioned Me, I also am sending you (cf. xvii. 18).'" They were done with the past, and it was the future that henceforth concerned them—the high ministry to which He had called them and for which the bygone days of His earthly fellowship with them had been a preparation. And that they might the more clearly realise this and be assured that His purpose stood fast, He reiterated their commission. Twice already had He delivered it : first at Cæsarea Philippi, where He addressed it to Peter alone in recognition of his great confession (Mt. xvi. 19) ; and then at Capernaum on the eve of His departure from Galilee to all the Twelve (Mt. xviii. 18). And now He repeats it not to Peter alone nor yet to all the Twelve but to this mixed company of His disciples—ten of the Apostles and " them that were with them," including not only the two from Emmaus but Mary the Magdalene, Joanna (cf. Lk. viii. 3), Mary the mother of James the Little, and other devoted women (Lk. xxiv. 10). It was thus, as we have already observed (see exposition of Mt. xvi. 19), no ordination of a priestly caste exclusively endowed with the prerogative of absolution but a charge to all His faithful disciples in all ages. And see how solemnly He now pronounces

it after the dramatic fashion, congenial to the Oriental mind, which He had employed so largely in the later days of His earthly ministry (see exposition of ix. 6, 7). Remember that in Greek, as in Hebrew and Latin, the word for "spirit" meant also "wind" and "breath" (cf. iii. 8). And so it is written here: "He breathed" or rather "blew (a word which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament) on them, and saith unto them, 'Receive ye the Holy Breath.'"

3. TO THE DISCIPLES A WEEK LATER

XX. 24-31

24 *But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.*

25 *The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.*

26 *And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them : then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.*

27 *Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands ; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side : and be not faithless, but believing.*

28 *And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.*

29 *Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed : blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

30 *And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book :*

31 *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

WHEN it is written (ver. 19) that it was to " the disciples " that the Lord manifested Himself on the evening of that memorable first day of the week, not merely is it not the Apostles alone that are meant but one of these, Thomas the Twin (see exposition of Mt. x. 3) was absent ; and the Evangelist mentions this circumstance with gentle reproach when he says " Thomas, one of the Twelve." There were twelve no longer

since the traitor was gone ; yet he speaks here not of " the Eleven " (cf. Mt. xxviii. 16 ; Lk. xxiv. 9, 33 ; Ac. i. 26, ii. 14) but of " the Twelve," signifying the men whom the Lord had chosen and who should have continued stedfast (cf. vi. 70). It was not disloyalty that kept Thomas away when his comrades assembled that evening to take counsel together. It was his inveterate despondency. Always looking on the dark side and anticipating the worst, he scouted the stories of Mary and Peter as " idle tales " ; and when his comrades told him on the morrow what had happened at their conference, he still remained incredulous and asseverated that nothing would convince him short of ocular and palpable demonstration. " Unless," said he, " I see on His hands the print of the nails, and thrust (literally " cast "—the word rendered " put up " in xviii. 11) my finger into the place where the nails were, and thrust my hand into His side, I *shall not* believe."

His very emphasis, " protesting too much, methinks," proved that his incredulity was shaken ; and when " after eight days," that is, on the ancient reckoning, the next Sunday evening, the disciples reassembled, Thomas was with them. Again the veil was lifted from their hearts, and they beheld the Lord in their midst and heard His greeting. All the past week He had been with them unseen, even as He is with His people evermore (cf. Mt. xviii. 20, xxviii. 20), " knowing their down-sitting and their uprising, and acquainted with all their ways." He had heard Thomas's asseveration, and now He offers him the evidence which he had demanded. " Bring thy finger here," said He as Thomas hung back for very shame, " and see My hands ; and bring thy hand, and thrust it into My side. And have done with unbelief : believe." Could Thomas actually have thus handled the Lord's spiritual body ? Not indeed in the way of physical sense ; but the same miracle which unveiled " the eyes the heart " and made audible what the natural ear could not hear, quickened also the sense of touch. Thomas heard the Lord's voice, and he beheld the marks of His passion, and he could have touched them. But he no longer required such evidence. His incredulity vanished, and he cried : " My Lord and my God ! "

This is the earliest express confession of our Lord's deity; and it is remarkable that it should have fallen from the lips of that incredulous disciple. Yet see how He received it. He had hailed with exultant gladness Peter's confession at Cæsarea Philippi, and it was merely a confession of His Messiahship (cf. Mt. xvi. 15-19); but it bespoke a brave faith which recognised His hidden glory, whereas in the confession of Thomas there was in truth no faith at all. With him it was not believing but seeing. And "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Here according to the Evangelist's original design the Gospel closes, since the succeeding chapter is an appendix which, for a reason unfolded in due course, he thought fit to add. Observe the significance of the present conclusion (vers. 30, 31). First he admonishes his readers that, though written to supplement those of his predecessors (cf. Introduction, p. xxix), his narrative is far from exhausting the fullness of grace and truth which came through Jesus Christ. But what he had written was sufficient for his purpose. And what was his purpose? During his ministry in the Province of Asia there prevailed at Ephesus, a subtle and mischievous heresy, Gnosticism in the bud. Its author was Cerinthus who, holding that postulate of Greek philosophy, the essential evil of matter and the consequent impossibility of a holy God wearing a material and therefore impure body, drew a distinction between Jesus and Christ. Jesus was a mere man, and the Christ a Divine Being who descended upon him at his baptism in the form of a dove and left him at his crucifixion. It was Jesus who suffered and died, and the Christ who spoke divine words and wrought divine works; but they remained distinct persons, and there was no Incarnation. An Incarnation was a metaphysical impossibility.

As appears from his first epistle, the "covering letter" which accompanied the Gospel when it was delivered to the various churches, this heresy, this denial that "Jesus is the Christ" (1 Jo. ii. 22), was before the mind of the Evangelist as he wrote. Remember how he announces his theme in the Prologue (i. 14): "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we

beheld His glory." And now at the close he writes : " These signs are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name." The Gospel begins with the Incarnation and ends with the Resurrection ; and the Incarnation is the union of God with humanity, and the Resurrection the union of humanity with God.

4. TO SEVEN AT THE LAKE OF GALILEE

(xxi. 1-23)

(I) THE GREAT TAKE OF FISH

xxi. 1-14

1 *After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias ; and on this wise shewed he himself.*

2 *There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.*

3 *Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth and entered into a ship immediately ; and that night they caught nothing.*

4 *But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore : but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.*

5 *Then Jesus saith unto them, *Children, have ye any meat ? They answered him, No.*

6 *And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.*

7 *Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.*

8 *And the other disciples came in a little ship ; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.*

9 *As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.*

10 *Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.*

11 *Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great*

* Or, *Sirs.*

fishes, an hundred and fifty and three : and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

12 Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou ? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

THE Risen Lord had much counsel to impart to His Apostles ere He went home to God ; and Jerusalem, where they could assemble only by stealth within closed doors for fear of the rulers (cf. xx. 19, 26), was no fitting scene for the conference which He desired. Already on the night of His betrayal He had told them that after He was risen again He would go before them into Galilee (Mt. xxvi. 32) ; and since the promise was unintelligible to them at the moment, He reminded them thereof in the message which He sent them by Mary and her companions on the Resurrection-morning (xxviii. 7, 10). In the dear homeland of gracious memories they would be secure from molestation ; and in His converse with them on that second Sunday evening He would instruct them to repair thither and await His appearing.

Their destination was Bethsaida, the fisher quarter of Capernaum by the Lake of Galilee or, as it was later named after the new capital of Herod Antipas (see exposition of Mt. xii. 9-21), the Sea of Tiberias (cf. vi. 1). There His fisher Apostles had their homes, and there they all awaited Him. Evidently He delayed His appearing, and as the days passed, their scanty resources were spent until they must bethink themselves of a livelihood. A group of them forgathered—Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael bar Talmai (see exposition of Mt. x. 3), and the sons of Zebedee, James and John, besides other two of His disciples. And who may these two have been ? The situation probably was that the fisher disciples entertained in their hospitable abodes their comrades who belonged elsewhere. Simon, with a fellow feeling for one who

like himself had incurred reproach, entertained Thomas whose home is unknown ; while Nathanael of Cana lodged with James and John. And who else would be the other two but Simon's brother Andrew who lived with him, and Zebedee, that old fisherman who so freely surrendered his sons at the Master's call (see exposition of Mt. iv. 21, 22) ? Inmates of two friendly homes (cf. Mk. i. 29), they met and debated what they should do. The Lord might appear at any moment, and unless they remained on the spot, they might miss Him ; but Peter, perhaps remembering the lesson which he had been taught in the matter of the Temple-tax (cf. Mt. xvii. 24-27), settled the question after his impetuous fashion. " I am away to fish " said he ; and they all assented : " We too are going with thee."

They left the house and " entered into the boat "—not Simon's boat, now long disused, but Zebedee's which he had been working with his hirelings (cf. Mk. i. 20) since his sons had left him. Whether it was that the night was too clear or that they had forgotten their skill in fishercraft, they sped ill. They caught nothing, and as they rowed ashore early in the morning with their empty nets, they were hailed some hundred yards off : " Lads, have ye any fish ? " for so the original signifies. It was a familiar question, which had often greeted them in former days as they rowed to the harbour where the merchants from Taricheæ (see exposition of Mt. iv. 12-16) awaited the return of the boats from the fishing ground ; and descrying in the dim light one standing on the beach, " where the waves break " as the Greek word literally means, they naturally took him for a merchant desirous of purchasing their cargo. " No " they shouted back. " Cast the net to starboard," he cried, " and ye will have a take " ; and supposing that from his position he had detected the ripple of a shoal, they obeyed, and their net was so packed that they could not draw it on board.

On that very spot a like marvel had occurred three years ago (cf. Lk. v. 1-11), and instantly the truth flashed home to John's quick mind. " It is the Lord ! " said he to Peter. Intent on securing their prey by plunging into the water and raising the net while his mates hauled it aboard, Peter had

stripped; and in his eagerness to greet the dear Master he donned his "reefer," a sailor's tunic, sleeveless and reaching to the knees, and cast himself into the sea. "He took his coat," reads the Syriac Version, "and girt it about his loins and cast himself into the lake, and was swimming, and came." His mates, less impetuous, got into—not "a little ship" but—"the small-boat," the dinghy of their large fishing-coble, and rowed slowly ashore, towing the full net.

On landing they approached the Lord, but He gave them no greeting, "Peace be unto you!" as on the two past Sunday evenings (cf. xx. 19, 26). They knew very well who He was, but as though He had been the stranger whom they supposed Him when He hailed them in the boat, He busied Himself with common matters. A fire of charcoal was laid beside Him, and the sight of it would bring back, at all events to Peter and John, a dark memory—that other fire of charcoal in the courtyard of Annas on the night of His arrest (cf. xviii. 18, the only other instance of the word in the New Testament). And another memory would visit them when they saw beside the fire not "bread" but "a loaf" and, laid on the coals for broiling, not "fish" but "a fish." It is another word than that which the Evangelist employs of the newly caught fish (vers. 6, 8, 11), and the difference is that it denotes a fish ready dressed. It is the word which he uses of the five dried fishes wherewith the Lord had fed the five thousand (cf. vi. 9, 11); and the sight of this single fish laid on the coals would recall the miracle to their remembrance. They silently wondered at His aloofness, not perceiving His gracious purpose. It was that by allaying their excitement and renewing the revelation which He had vouchsafed on that memorable evening, He might fit their minds to receive what He would now communicate to them.

See how He proceeded. First He bade them "bring of the fishes which they had now caught," and which they had left struggling in the net astern of the dinghy. Here the word for "fishes" is the same which is used of the fish laid on the coals (ver. 9), signifying that they should dress them ere bringing them. They hastened to obey, and Peter, ever foremost,

boarded the dinghy and dragged the net ashore. No wonder it had baffled their efforts to hoist it into the coble ; for it was packed with large fishes, no fewer than a hundred and fifty-three, and yet, to their further surprise, it had stood the strain without a rent. Selecting and dressing so many as might serve a hungry crew for a meal, they brought them to the Lord ; but without seeing them laid on the coals, " Come," said He, " and dine." The Revisers have it " break your fast," and it is indeed true that the word in the original denotes " the early meal." But with the Jews this was not breakfast. The day's business began early in the cool of morning, and a workman's breakfast was a light refreshment—a piece of bread and a little dried fruit which he ate on his way to work. He rested during the sultry noonday, and returning home took his " early meal " usually about eleven o'clock. This was the first real meal of the day, the first that gathered the household round the table ; and it was followed by " supper " in the evening when the day's work was done.

It was to " the early meal " that our Lord now summoned the seven, hungry after the long night's fishing and all that had since befallen. He took the loaf, a mere cake, and the fish, the solitary fish which they had seen laid on the coals, and served out to them this scanty provision. Scanty as it was, it sufficed, multiplying in His hands like the five barley loaves and the two fishes wherewith He had fed the hungry multitude. Had they doubted who He was, they would have been assured now. It was indeed the Lord ; and, remarks the Evangelist, " this was the third time that He manifested Himself to the disciples after that He was risen from the dead." On this reckoning what becomes of His manifestation to Mary at the sepulchre (cf. xx. 1-18) besides His manifestations on that same first day of the week to Simon and the two at Emmaus ? These were indeed manifestations of the Risen Lord indubitably authenticated, but they were private manifestations, not manifestations " to the disciples," nor had St. John himself witnessed them ; and therefore he leaves them out of his reckoning in accordance with his purpose to testify only what his own eyes had seen and his own ears had heard.

(2) COLLOQUY WITH PETER

xxi. 15-19a

15 *So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.*

16 *He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

17 *He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

18 *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkest whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.*

19 *This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.*

THAT meal on the shore of the Lake served a double purpose. By recalling to the disciples the miracle of the feeding of the multitude and the communion in the Upper Room it lifted their thoughts from the excitement of the moment to the redemption which the miracle had pre-figured and the Holy Supper celebrated, and which it was now their mission to proclaim. And therewith it brought home to them how the situation had been transformed. Observe how pointedly St. John states that the Lord merely gave them the bread and the fish, thus tacitly correcting the vague report of the scene which had gone abroad and which represented Him as

Himself eating of the broiled fish (cf. Lk. xxiv. 42, 43, where see exposition), as though the body which He had brought forth from the sepulchre and presently carried to Heaven, were still "flesh and blood," needing physical nourishment. That crude version of the incident came of the idea which His Resurrection suggested to His disciples in the first flush of their surprise, that He had been restored to them as of yore ; and even as He had discovered the reality to the Magdalene at the sepulchre (cf. xx. 17), so here by no longer eating with them He brings it home to the seven.

Thus he fitted them for receiving His counsels. He began with Peter ; and we miss the purport of the ensuing colloquy unless we understand that, though our Version indiscriminately renders both by "love," there are two words in the original. Recognising their distinction (see exposition of Mt. v. 44, x. 2), read the passage thus, and its significance will appear :

"Jesus saith to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John (cf. i. 42), dost thou regard Me more than these?' He saith to Him, 'Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I *love* Thee.' He saith to him, 'Feed My lambs.'

"He saith to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of John, dost thou regard Me?' He saith to Him, 'Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I *love* Thee.' He saith to him, 'Be a shepherd to My poor sheep.'

"He saith to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, dost thou love Me?' Peter was grieved because the third time it was 'Dost thou love Me' that He said to him ; and he said to Him, 'Lord, Thou knowest all things : Thou perceivest that I love Thee.' Jesus saith to him, 'Feed My poor sheep.' "

It is, though grammatically admissible, an inept fancy that when the Lord asked "Dost thou regard Me *more than these*?" He meant "more than thou regardest these things"—the boats, the nets, and the fish, as though, when Simon and his comrades went a-fishing last evening, the reason was that, weary of waiting for the Master, they had despaired of ever seeing Him again and had resumed their old occupation. Far other indeed was their thought ; and the Lord's question was "Dost thou regard Me more than these, thy fellows, do?" The reference is to

Peter's boast in the Upper Room on hearing the announcement of the desertion in Gethsemane, that whatever his comrades might do, he would stand faithful (cf. Mt. xxvi. 33). His claim then was not that he loved the Master more than the others but that he was more resolute and would never desert Him. He had belied his boast and his resolution had miserably failed ; but now in his time of humiliation he claims and justly claims that his love had never failed. Even at the shameful moment when terror had so stricken him, his heart had been true to the dear Master. He holds to this, and meets the Lord's first question and again His second with an asseveration that, however he may have failed in *regard*, He *loved* Him, and that He knew it. On the third occasion the Lord accepted his correction and asked not " Dost thou *regard* " but " Dost thou *love* Me ? " and this cut him to the quick. It seemed as though the Lord were now impugning not merely his head but his heart, and he broke into a passionate remonstrance. Surely " those eyes of far perception " could read his heart (cf. ii. 24, 25) and perceive the love which was written on his sorrowful face : " Thou perceivest that I love Thee."

It was written of old : " I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more " ; and it may seem unworthy of our Lord that, though He had met with Peter alone on the Resurrection Day (cf. Lk. xxiv. 34) and had it all out with him and had already assured the penitent of His forgiveness, He should now bring up his sin again before his comrades. It looks ungenerous, but there was a large and gracious purpose in His seeming cruelty.

For observe (1) that, though He addresses Peter, He had the others no less in view, and whatever reproach was implied, it fell upon them all alike. For all the Eleven had deserted Him in Gethsemane ; and Peter had this to his credit, that like John he had rallied from his panic and followed the captive Master to the mansion of Annas (cf. xviii. 15). And in truth no reproach was intended by our Lord's reiterated question. His purpose was not to upbraid Peter with his empty boast but to show him and the others with him how they might make amends for their disloyalty. While He was here, the Good Shepherd was

moved with compassion when He saw the multitudes, because they were as sheep having no shepherd ; and now that He was going away, He charged the disciples to prove their sorrow for their disloyalty to Himself by caring for His flock, " gathering His lambs with their arms and carrying them in their bosoms, and gently leading those that are with young." " Feed My lambs : be shepherds to My poor sheep."

And (2), if He seemed at the moment to humble Peter and put him to an open shame by addressing the exhortation specially to him, He forthwith exalted him in the sight of his comrades by foretelling how grandly he would atone for the past. After some eight and thirty years of devotion Peter died a martyr's death at Rome, he and St. Paul, it is said, on the same day. As a Roman citizen the latter was honourably executed by beheading, but Peter suffered the *servile supplicium* of crucifixion ; and the story is that, counting himself unworthy to die like his Lord, at his own request he was nailed, in ignominious fashion, head downward on the cross. " Verily, verily I say unto thee, in thy younger days thou wast wont to gird thyself and walk where thou wouldest ; but when thou art waxed old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall drive thee (so the Syriac Version) where thou wilt not." It would be no dark saying to the disciples, interpreted as it was for them by the scene in the courtyard of the Prætorium, where the Master had been stripped and bound face downward to the scourging-post, clinging to it with outstretched hands, and then, with His cross on His back, driven to Calvary, like a beast to the slaughter, with lashes and imprecations as He stumbled on His way.

(3) THE DISCIPLE WHO SHOULD NEVER DIE

xxi. 19b-23

19b *And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.*

20 *Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following ; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee ?*

21 *Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do ?*

22 *Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ? follow thou me.*

23 *Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die ; yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die ; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ?*

THE Lord was not done with the seven when He had thus movingly charged them with the office of ministering to the souls for which He had died ; and He would afterwards manifest Himself again not only to them but to the rest of the Eleven and with them probably to others of the numerous disciples whom He had won in Galilee. Perhaps this was the occasion when, as St. Paul mentions (1 Cor. xv. 6), He “ appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom,” observes the Apostle, writing twenty-six years later in 55 A.D., “ the greater part remain until now.” Meanwhile, however, He postponed further general converse. The three were present who had been His close intimates in the days of His flesh—Peter and the sons of Zebedee, James and John ; and since they must bear the chief responsibility in the coming days, He desired now to commune with them alone. As He had been wont to do of old (cf. Mt. xvii. 1 ; xxvi. 37), He would now take them apart. Though no express mention is made of James, since there was no occasion, it follows from our Lord’s constant practice that He

now also summoned him to attend. And whither did He conduct them? It may well have been to that familiar retreat on the hillside behind Capernaum where He had been accustomed to commune with God (see exposition of Mt. vi. 6, and Lk. vi. 12).

“Follow Me” He said to Peter, and with a look invited the other two. Peter turned to see whether they were coming; and when he saw John following, a thought leaped into his mind. The Lord had foretold his own terrible yet glorious destiny, and what, he wondered, was in store for that comrade who had enjoyed the Master’s peculiar confidence? He had been entrusted in the Upper Room with the dark secret of Judas’s treason (cf. xiii. 23–26), and would he not be entrusted with the secret of his own destiny? It was a sudden thought, and after his impulsive manner Peter gave it voice without staying to consider it or frame his speech. Observe his broken question as it is in the original (cf. xiv. 22; xvii. 25): “Lord—but this man—what of him?”

It was just the old Peter over again; nor should it be overlooked how the Master here deals with him just as of old, since He too was still himself, “the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever.” His answer was indeed a rebuke, but it was a kindly rebuke with that gentle touch of humour which in His familiar intercourse with the Twelve had always softened His admonitions. “If,” said He, “I will that he tarry till I come” or rather “pending My coming, what is it to thee? Thou—follow thou Me.” Thus He dismisses Peter’s idle question and summons him to the business on hand. By His “coming” He does not mean here His Second Advent but, as the phrase so often denoted on His lips (see exposition of Mt. x. 16–23), His providential interposition in human affairs. And so He says to Peter: “Suppose it be My will that, while you must die a martyr’s death, John should live on and witness the working out of My purposes.” But the primitive believers with their impatient anticipation of the Lord’s immediate return construed this saying of His as an intimation that John would survive until that final consummation and pass without dying into His glory. And so the rumour went abroad.

Here emerges the reason why the Evangelist, after completing

his Gospel according to his original purpose (cf. xx. 30, 31), thought fit to append this twenty-first chapter, which by its characteristic phrasing is indubitably authenticated as from his own hand. It was in extreme old age that he wrote the Gospel at Ephesus and delivered it to his churches in the Province of Asia as his last gift, a permanent memorial of his long ministry (see Introduction, pp. xxviii f.) ; and learning presently that his disciples were disconcerted at the prospect of his departure which, as they reckoned, would falsify that promise of the Lord, he dictated to his amanuensis a farther page, recounting that manifestation at the Lake of Galilee which, with much else, he would fain have left untold by reason of its peculiar intimacy. His purpose was to explain what it was that the Lord had actually said ; and observe how he divulges only so much as that purpose required, disclosing nothing of the Lord's converse thereafter at the private interview.

It is always difficult to overtake an error once it has gone abroad ; and it is not a little remarkable that despite the Evangelist's explicit and emphatic protest the notion persisted after his demise.

For many look again to find that face,
Beloved John's to whom I ministered,
Somewhere in life about the world ; they err :
Either mistaking what was darkly spoke
At ending of his book, as he relates,
Or misconceiving somewhat of this speech
Scattered from mouth to mouth, as I suppose.
Believe ye will not see him any more
About the world with his divine regard !
For all was as I say, and now the man
Lies as he lay once, breast to breast with God.

Still the notion persisted, and St. Augustine tells how in his day after the lapse of four centuries there were some who believed that John had never died and was only sleeping in his grave at Ephesus, and persuaded themselves that they could see the earth which covered him, gently stirred by his breathing. And so late as the closing years of the eighteenth century Lavater, in his insatiable yearning for a heavenly

manifestation, still cherished the ancient delusion. He believed that the beloved disciple, notwithstanding his protestation, had never died and was still alive upon the earth ; and as he went about, he would wistfully scrutinise each stranger whom he encountered in the hope that it might be he.

CONCLUSION OF THE GOSPEL

xxi. 24-25

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24 *This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things : and we know that his testimony is true.*

25 *And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.*

THE Evangelist has now completed his task. It is a wonderful story that he has told, and it had need of attestation in an age when literary forgery was largely practised, especially by heretics who propagated their opinions by publishing them in the name of distinguished teachers. Already as early as the year 51 St. Paul had experienced this annoyance (cf. 2 Th. ii. 1, 2), and thenceforth his practice in his correspondence was to take the manuscript from his amanuensis at the close and add his signature and benediction in his own characteristic style of penmanship (cf. iii. 17): "The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write." Writing as he did, like the other Evangelists, anonymously (see Introduction, p. xxvi), it was impossible for St. John to accredit his Gospel after this fashion, and its authenticity is otherwise and even more effectively guaranteed by his colleagues, the presbyters of Ephesus. Their attestation is twofold: (1) The Evangelist was none other than that unnamed disciple who figures not only in the immediately preceding passage but throughout the Gospel; and (2) he had been an eye-witness of all that he has related, and they were assured, not merely by their personal acquaintance with him but by collateral evidence, that his testimony was true.

And then the Evangelist adds his own last word. As he had begun by telling of the inexhaustible fullness of the revelation of grace and truth which came through Jesus Christ, the

Word made flesh (cf. i. 16, 17), so now he closes by admonishing us that not only was the revelation larger than his meagre testimony but no human mind could grasp and no earthly pen record its infinite wonder. Were it all recorded, the world would not have room for the books that should be written.

Some fifteen centuries ago in his monastery at Pelusium on the Delta of the Nile Isidore, the Alexandrian scholar and saint, profitably employed himself in dealing with problems submitted to him by correspondents near and far. A collection in five books of two thousand and twelve of his learned, wise, and gracious letters survives; and one of these deals with a question on the passage before us. It had been put to his correspondent by a Jew, who charged the Evangelist with palpable and gross exaggeration; and Isidore deftly begins "hoisting the engineer with his own petard," observing that if the Evangelist's language be indeed hyperbolical, not only is it legitimate hyperbole but it has numerous parallels in the Old Testament Scriptures which that dull scoffer accepted as divine. Thus it is written of the cities of Canaan (Dt. i. 28) that they were "walled up to heaven"; of the Promised Land (Ex. iii. 8) that it "flowed with milk and honey"; and of storm-tossed mariners (Ps. cvii. 26) that "they mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths." He might well have quoted further from Philo, that brilliant Jewish teacher, a passage which St. John may here have had in his mind (cf. exposition of i. 16): "See you not that God does not utter His oracles in proportion to the greatness of His perfection but ever in view of the capacity of those who are to be profited thereby. Else who could contain the might of His words which exceed all hearing?"

But is this saying of our Evangelist really a hyperbole? It plainly appears that the things which Jesus did, as these are written in the Gospels, are mere gleanings of a rich harvest, mere drops from a vast ocean. Remember, for example, how in reviewing His Galilean ministry He upbraided the cities wherein most of His mighty works had been done (Mt. xi. 20, 21). "Woe unto thee, Chorazin!" He cried; "woe unto thee, Bethsaida!" In both He had done much, yet it

is not written that He ever visited Chorazin, and only two miracles are recorded that He wrought at Bethsaida (cf. Lk. ix. 10 ; Mk. viii. 22). If a mere selection of the things which He did, chiefly at Capernaum and Jerusalem, has filled our Gospels, whole libraries would scarce have contained a record of all the wonders which He scattered like snow over the length and breadth of the land.

And furthermore, as St. Isidore remarks, it is not written here that "there are also many other things which Jesus did *in this world*." Our Lord's ministry neither began nor ended with the days of His flesh. For He was the Eternal Son, sharing the Father's glory from everlasting, and His Incarnation was merely His manifestation to the children of men. What He was while He dwelt here, that He had been from the beginning and is and shall be evermore. The story of His undiscovered ministration ere He came forth from God is unwritten ; but it is written (Rev. xiii. 8) that "the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world," signifying that all down the ages He had in vicarious love been bearing the burden of human sin and suffering and sorrow. Nor did His ministry cease when He vanished out of His disciples' sight on Mount Olivet. For still in His glory He is the Eternal Saviour.

No fable old, nor mythic lore,
Nor dream of bards and seers,
No dead fact stranded on the shore
Of the oblivious years ;—

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is He ;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

If all this were written, could the world contain the books?

THE LOVE OF GOD OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, THE
GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST OUR ELDER
BROTHER, AND THE PEACE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
WHO COMFORTETH US AS ONE WHOM HIS MOTHER
COMFORTETH, BE WITH US IN OUR GOING OUT AND
COMING IN, TILL WE REACH OUR FATHER'S HOUSE
TO GO NO MORE OUT. AMEN.

DATE DUE

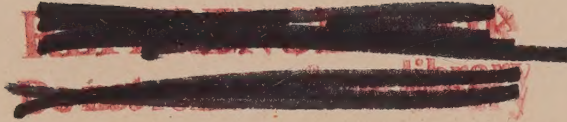
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